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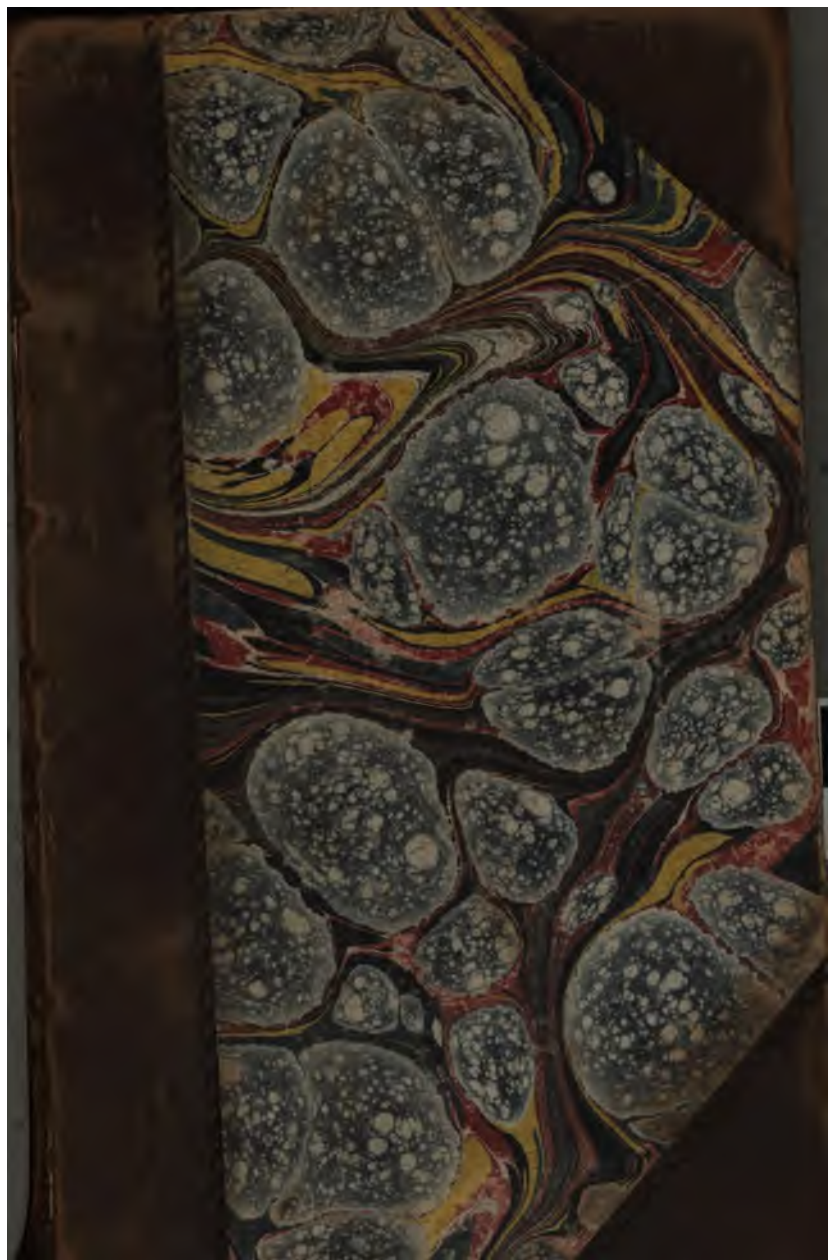
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SCRIPTURE DOCTRINES ILLUSTRATED.

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SCRIPTURE DOCTRINES
ILLUSTRATED.



BY MRS. STEVENS.

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SCRIPTURE DOCTRINES ILLUSTRATED.

DOCTRINES OF GRACE.

1.—THE FALL OF MAN.

As it is proposed in this little volume to present the young inquirer with a simple view of the *doctrines of grace*, as contained in the Scripture, it will be a suitable introduction to begin our inquiry at the root of that spiritual disease which (to the glory of our God) has been met by the provision of covenant mercy in the Redemption.

The very term *redemption* implies that something has been forfeited and *lost*: and when we speak of loss, we consequently suppose that there has been a previous possession. Hence these terms lead us to view the *condition of man*—as having suffered the loss of that fulness he originally possessed: great

truths, on which the word of revelation dwells with impressive solemnity, and to the understanding of which we are mercifully invited.

The fulness originally possessed by man, is expressed in terms easy to be understood by such as have any spiritual discernment ; and when we read the record wherein it is described, we at once admire the Divine bounty and the creature's dignity. The paradise inhabited by man rises to our view in all the loveliness of a spot teeming with life, blest as the garden of the Lord, and pronounced by him "very good." We can conceive of rich luxuriance abounding in every flower, plant, and shrub. We picture to ourselves the shade, the bower, and the beauty amidst which man was appointed to live, and we are conscious that herein the Creator formed a dwelling well-adapted to the taste and enjoyment of an intellectual and rational creature. We go further ; we not only believe that this Eden for man, was exempt from toil, trouble, death, or pain ; but that it was a chosen spot whereon the countenance of the Almighty turned complacently, shedding thereby the beams, out of which light, life, and joy issued. It must needs follow that *Paradise* was a place of bliss.

And for whom was all this riches of bounty displayed ? Even for an inhabitant, higher in dignity, more exquisitely formed, more marvellously endowed than any of the other works of God—even for man ! A creature brought into being by counsel and covenant, and created for the display of the eternal glory of Jehovah. The counsel is—“ Let us make man.” The standard proposed is—“ after our likeness ; ” and the investiture of honor is—“ let him have dominion.” Thus man came forth in *original innocence*, with body and soul alike pure and unsullied, actuated by principles that were holy, diffusing their pure influence through every willing member ; possessed of conscious immortality in the powers of a soul, whose capacities and desires were formed for satisfaction in God only ; and well fitted to glorify his Maker and to be glorified by him : as a constituted lord likewise, to rule over the works of God with delegated power, exercising his authority in love, and governing in wisdom and truth. To minds like ours, now clouded by ignorance, and perverted by sin, it may be difficult to realize paradisaical bliss ; yet, in proportion to our experience of the Spirit’s new-creating grace, we shall have an understanding of Adam’s blessedness, more

especially in that particular wherein he admitted to "fellowship with the light," be privileged to hold communion with his God. This we know is the privilege *restored*, as read in 1 John i. 5—7. And we can readily believe that a glorious perfection of this grade originally satisfied the soul of Adam.

It was by no means an alloy to the happiness of man that he was constituted *dependent*. To a holy soul what can be more blissful than to perpetually to rest upon Him who is uncreated holiness! To a creature finite and impotent what more assuring than to repose in Him who is infinite and omnipotent! And to a loving soul what more welcome and refreshing than to dwell with the object beloved, and to know that support and sufficiency shall be found therein! Childlike affections were wrought in Adam's breast: for he was a son of God; and the expression of filial dependence was a *privilege* to one innocent, and untroubled by bondage and unworthy fear. Whilst therefore it was necessary in the Divine order of government that man should have a law, and that he should be required to manifest a spirit of obedience to the Lawgiver, the very law was made instrumental to bring forth dispositions most pleasurable to

innocent soul, and to quicken the recollection of the greatness of the defence and protection under which he lived.

Such reflections upon the manifestation of God's power and grace in the creation will call forth our admiration of the *divine* nature; for herein we trace somewhat of the unsearchable goodness of God. The *human* nature likewise appears before us, as admirable, excellent, and fully adapted to the ends for which it was produced. But our thoughts should take a wider excursion, and consider that great and peculiar end which the *covenant* in Christ contemplated. Revelation shews us this great design, all things being in the counsels of Jehovah made subservient to the honour of the *Eternal Son*. The creation is declared to be made *by* him, John i. 1—3, and *for* him, Col. i. 16. He is constituted heir of all things, Heb. i. 2; and the world with its inhabitants is *Christ's* by a covenant decree, Isaiah xlv. 23; Phil. ii. 9; Psalm ii. 8, 9. This beautiful order of things, therefore, in the creation, is as the forming of a garment or vesture with which the Lord of glory will adorn himself; and creatures, thus the property of Christ, are reserved for a future *scene*, wherein he will be magnified in

them. It is important to keep this in view, since it is this eternal purpose that expounds to us the nature of the *redemption*: for, as is already understood, the blessedness we have been contemplating was *lost* by man—the fulness he originally possessed, was exchanged for beggary and destitution, and the heights whereon he once stood erect and joyous, were succeeded by depths of prostration most humiliating and most ruinous. Satan, the treacherous adversary, prevailed to seduce the privileged inhabitants of Eden from their allegiance, dependence, and love; and transgressing this law, and eating of the fruit of the tree whereof God had said “Ye shall not eat thereof,” their innocence fled—their purity ceased—their inheritance was forfeited, and the Lord God drove out the man from the Garden of Eden;—and ah! worse than all, drove out the man from fellowship and communion with himself: for “what fellowship hath light with darkness, or what communion can there be betwixt Christ and Belial?”

The history of these affecting truths will be found in the first chapters of Genesis, which should be read, not merely as containing a record of truths simply historical, but as *involving* those great and soul-important

particulars on which the whole Scriptures expatiate.

We ought to endeavour to obtain a clear understanding of the extent of the evil into which our first parents fell. When the *act alone* is contemplated, we are not sufficiently impressed with its abominations; and hence might be in danger of forming unjust conceptions of the Divine severity. We are taught to believe that the weight of judgment following that act is incalculable, involving the whole human race, and procuring miseries to thousands—irremediable miseries, save as they are met in the redemption; we ought therefore to weigh the transgression in an opposite scale with the sentence of punishment which followed; that thus we may give glory to God, and agree with him in condemning man. Let us, then, examine the act and ascertain its true character.

We immediately detect the sin of *infidelity*, subtilely working in the temptation. The word of holy warning had been explicit, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;" the denial of this word, "Ye shall *not* surely die," was an act of effrontery on the part of Satan; but the *admission* of the liar's accusation of the Most High was an act of

treachery on the part of Eve, furthered to unbelief. When had she known the God her mercies untrue? Had she not lived upon his faithfulness, and had she not heard his law; ought she not to have believed his threatening, and to have adhered to his rule? The readiness with which Adam yielded to the same temptation involved him in the same guilt, and stained our nature with a deep-seated blot which it has never lost.

What *ingratitude* and *discontent* are discoverable! Surely, the cup of happiness was filled up to the brim; yea, as David expresseth it—it *ran over*. In the fulness of original joy we can conceive of no lack; and scarcely we suppose, could room have been found for one *transient* wish for something more. But when the promise of attaining some undefined greatness, or some possible equality with God himself, was insinuated into the mind, immediately without fear or disinclination the coveted fruit was taken, and the ambitious hope indulged. What presumption—what pride—and how fearfully spreading this transgressing nature, this foul disease—how too truly generated in all, who, descending from Adam possess his fallen and haughty independence.

What *cruelty* likewise, standing as Ada

did, in the character of representative of a whole race; how heedless of the consequences to descend to his children! how regardless of the dishonor done to his God, his father, his benefactor! and how reckless of the curse to be inherited here, or for ever, by a nature thus marred and corrupt! If indeed we may surmise that such consequences were not believed, and such results only considered as *possible* evils, we do not thereby lessen the guilt of Adam. If he discredited the threat, then it was by *infidelity*: if he believed, but despised, then it was by the crime of *rebellion*: if he imagined a possibility of being able to avert the evil, and prevent the curse, then it was by *pride* and *arrogance*. In every point of view, therefore, the sin was monstrous, great, and abominable; provoking most justly God's wrath and indignation, and followed most righteously by the execution of the threatening denounced.

The relative consequences of Adam's sin are asserted in one short sentence contained in 1 Cor. xv. 22. as also in Rom. v. 12. Here we learn that the awfully affecting dissolution of the union of the soul and body of man, on which our eyes are continually turned, originated in the offence of our first parent, and that it is the execution of the penalty affixed

to transgression, "The wages of sin is death!" The sorrows of life are likewise expounded to us in the same way, "Man is born to trouble;" it is his inheritance as the offspring of a fallen parent. *Paradisaical* peace exists not in the wilderness world, and as on the natural production of the earth the blighting displeasure of the Lord is sometimes expressed, so also is it manifest that upon the days of man a cloud is risen, many times giving forth heavy drops of that night which has succeeded to Eden's day. Our way to eternity is darkened and dismal: man, as a sinner, treads amidst scorpions, pits, and perils; and after closing his day of sorrow and spiritual death, passes into a region yet more dreary and dark. What other portion can be hoped or anticipated by one, who, after the spirit and example of Adam, commits trespass against his Creator and Lord! That our nature is corrupted after the likeness of fallen man is understood by the Christian, not only by divine assertion, but by observation and experience: he sees and he feels that the workings of *unbelief* and *infidelity* are in every sinner's heart, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." Ps. liii. 1. "There is *none* that understandeth." "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Rom. iii. 11, 18. He also sees and feels that *discontent* and *ingratitude* are the dispositions of our *nature*, being rebellious against the Divine will and government, "Man's spirit lusteth to envy." James iv. 5. "The wicked are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest," Isa. lvii. 20. and hence we are "murmurers, complainers." Jude 16. Whatever may be the abundance of our lot, or the overflowings of God's mercies to us, we are ever coveting some further joy; and grasping at what we deem some greater good. Out of the heart proceedeth "*Covetousness*." Mark vii. 22. If not gratified, we presently complain; and hard thoughts of God gain possession of the mind. The reproach addressed to Israel, is due to us. We are nourished up by the parental providence of our God, but we rebel against him; we are more base and brutal in our understanding and affections than the beasts that perish; "The ox knows its owner, and the ass its master's crib"—but we do not know—we do not consider! Isa. i. 2, 3. *Cruelty* blends with our pride and independence. That ruinous consequences follow transgression, we know: and however we may labour to darken our conscience, or to throw off the sense of responsibility, we cannot prevail to extinguish,

utterly, that measure of natural light which serves to give us a sense of our liability to punishment from God. Nevertheless, our desperate nature resolves to venture upon the prohibited object; we dare or defy the results of which we are forewarned; and thus upon our *own* condition inflict increasing wounds, and procure accumulating sorrows; whilst upon our connexions, offspring, and relatives, we without hesitation deal out, or generate, progressing evil. "The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of *cruelty*." Psa, lxxiv. 20. "Destruction and misery are in their ways." Rom. iii. 16.

This is the condition of man, entailed upon him by reason of the corruption of his *nature* in Adam, and which by reason of the enmity of his natural heart to the Divine nature and law, is confirmed by him. As it is written, "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Rom. viii. 7. "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God *through the ignorance that is in them*, because of the blindness of their heart." Eph. iv. 18.

A condition thus depraved and corrupt ought to be abhorred by us. When contemplated in

others, it probably receives the expression of our honest indignation; we unite in the censure due to Adam; we extend it still further, and censure transgression as developed by other men; but this will not suffice for any beneficial results to our own souls. After having looked upon the ruin spread through the earth, and having traced up that ruin to its source in the original transgression, we should call in our observations to a spot nearer home, and look into the wide-spread ruin that has prevailed in our own breast: in this region we may discover every foul evil that has marred the beauty of man; and *our* unbelief, ingratitude, presumption, and cruelty, should be the subject of our conviction and grief. It will not be difficult even for the youngest inquirer after truth to detect these sins working within him, either as a leaven that subtly and secretly mingles itself with the whole sentiment and practice of the soul, or as breaking forth visibly into formal acts of rebellion against God. Such corruption as belongs to our fallen nature is not an inactive evil; we are described as covered with *disease*—as comparable to an open *sepulchre*—as altogether *filthy*;—and, as such, *progressing* in all, waxing worse and worse, corrupt and cor-

rupters, as if unconscious of the malady, or insensible of the growth of the evil ; thereby giving more fearful demonstration of confirmed and deep-seated ruin.

How great is the mercy which calls us to reflection, and assists our search ! It cannot, indeed, be deemed a *pleasurable* engagement thus to explore a region wherein no sights or sounds can reach us, but those of corruption and destruction ; yet is it needful towards the knowledge of deliverance. We ought to put a resolute constraint upon our will, and determine to follow the light that is so graciously held forth to direct us in our way. No doubt *millions* of souls have perished through blindness and ignorance. They have also yielded to the delusive voice of flatterers ; they have been content to form their religious opinions by the standard of human conjecture ; they have been willing to substitute their own inventions for the Divine revelation ; and they are lost ! Are we not awfully infatuated, if knowing and believing this, we nevertheless continue in the same delusions ? if, amidst opportunity to be rightly informed, we will not be troubled to seek information ? or if, from the dread of *discovering* our ruin, we prefer to inherit its final curse ? or if, after all, we yet

resist the invitation, because we fear to plunge into the sorrow of soul which might ensue? Let us bring to mind the *comforting* counsels, and the instructive examples in the word. It is true, *self-knowledge* is humiliating: David saith, "There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones, by reason of my sin. My wounds stink, and are corrupt through my foolishness. I am troubled. I am bowed down greatly. My loins are filled with a loathsome disease, and there is no soundness in my flesh." Psalm xxxviii. 3—7. Job exclaims, "I abhor myself;—I repent in dust and ashes." Job xlii. 6. Isaiah confesses the humbling effect of having seen the Lord, "Woe is me, for I am undone;—I am a man of unclean lips." Isaiah vi. 5. These and many other examples appear in the Scriptures to prove that self-knowledge is a requisite possession, if we would be saved; that when truly attained, according to the teaching of the Holy Ghost, who convinceth of sin, it is attended with prostration and distress; *but* that it issues in peace, as leading to the atonement in the great redemption. Why then should we shrink from the probe, or refuse to be searched? Better is it to weep now that we

may be comforted, than to indulge in the ill-founded mirth that must end in wailing.

Here we may pause. Our inquiry has conducted us to a view of the fearful change in man's condition, produced by the first transgression. It brings before us the corruptions of our nature; it commends to us the serious and diligent investigation of the evil; it calls upon us to look for its existence as unquestionably developed by our own course and conversation; and to be roused to the enquiry wherewithal one thus fallen, polluted, and impotent, may come before God.

However we may imagine that we understand the redemption, or appreciate the name of the Redeemer, we may be assured that our views are defective, if we be not well informed on the point before us; and that our affections, if not attended with *consciousness* of our individual wretchedness, are not imbued with the *Spirit's* testimony of the Great Deliverer. May we therefore be disposed by the Spirit of grace to meet the light, and to use it! So that whatever may be the character of its discoveries to us, we may with unflinching integrity *look* at the evil revealed, and wait to hear further what the Lord will speak.

II.—REDEMPTION OF THE EARTH.

WE have considered in our last chapter, the condition to which the earth and its inhabitants have been reduced by the transgression and fall of man. We have here to direct an inquiry to the heart-cheering revelation which proclaims the deliverance effected by a *great Redeemer*.

Redemption signifies the recovering or bringing back of somewhat lost or forfeited, on condition of an ample compensation being made ; and the application of this term to the great subject of the Gospel is intended to form a suitable description of the manner in which the earth and lost souls are brought back to the visible glory for which they were originally designed by the Creator. Our last subject served to shew us the scripture testimony respecting the covenant purpose towards the Eternal Son, who from all eternity is the constituted *heir of creation*, as Heb. i. 2, 8.

It served likewise to shew us how by an act of rebellion the inheritance of Christ was as it were marred, and, according to the appearance of things, wrested out of the hand of the rightful owner: a usurper is seen, occupying the place of power and rule over willing vassals, and Satan and sinners leagued together against the Holy One. But we are not to imagine that the conspiracy so formed shall prevail to impoverish the glorious Lord, nor to surmise that by the revolt of men the eternal design of the Almighty is subverted. The counsel of God standeth fast for ever, and the purpose of Jehovah can never be overthrown. The earth with its inhabitants are still the Lord's, and Christ shall reign for ever.

Had it been the intention of God by creation, only to form a race of creatures capable of happiness and enriched with fulness, we might suppose it possible that such creatures by transgression might so forfeit their blessings as to be *given up* to their destroying preference of the service of darkness: and in this act Jehovah's righteousness would have been unquestionable. But the Divine purpose being not merely to form vessels that might be *recipients* of his blessings, but in whom the

Eternal Son should have a peculiar possession, it *necessarily* follows, that whatever might be the circumstances, or the provocation of the earth, nothing should prevail to alter this covenant gift. Nevertheless, Jehovah, being holy, must adopt measures for the establishment of this gift, whereby the sanctity of the Divine perfection should be unimpeachable ; and hence is the covenant act styled *redemption*, and the possession is established by a *compensatory price*, in which all the Divine perfections are honoured and satisfied. Thus, speaking of the saved, it is said, "ye are bought with a price ;" 1 Cor. vi. 20. "ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of Christ ;" 1 Pet. i. 18. And again in Ephes. i. 7. "In whom we have redemption ;" and in the fourteenth verse, "until the redemption of the *purchased* possession."

Redemption is applied to *the world universally*, as it describes the work by which the earth is kept back from the perdition into which it is perpetually plunging. It is by this purpose in Christ that it is placed under a mediatorial government, which, as it were, holds it together ; so that although loosened, dissolved, and ready to perish, it still exists.

The effect of sin would be to *destroy* the whole earth. We have tokens of this in the daily and hourly decay which meets us in all animal and vegetable creation. We have *experience* of this in the sicknesses, decline, and death to which we ourselves are by transgression made heirs. But notwithstanding, generation after generation appears, and season after season gives back the suspended beauties of earth. And whence is all this? Only *by redemption*. All life, all mercy, has been forfeited; and its continuance, whether to the world generally, or to the inhabitants of the world particularly, is only because the *earth* is *redeemed*. Thus in Psalm lxxv. 3, it is declared, in reference to the covenant character of Christ, “the earth, and all the inhabitants thereof, are *dissolved*: I bear up the pillars of it. Selah.” In virtue of this redemption it is that in the long-suffering faithfulness of God, the sun riseth on the evil and on the good, and the rain descendeth on the just and on the unjust.

The expression to which we have referred in Ephes. i. 14, is very comprehensive of the glory obtained by Christ in this act of the covenant. This inheritance is styled a *purchased* possession, and believers are comforted *by the recollection* of their privilege, as being

sealed *until* the manifestation of the Lord's right shall be accomplished. The *possession* purchased or redeemed, does not apply only to the heirs of the kingdom, but to the earth universally, which is reserved for a restitution that will display the Lord's glory; and revelation assures us that in that period our Lord will not only be known as the glorious Redeemer of his people, but also as by redemption the universal Lord of all things. This great truth runs through the Scripture. The prophetic voice declares that the Lord Christ has been from all eternity thus constituted *Lord*, Psalm ii. 4—7. Isaiah xlv. 23. Phil. ii. 9—11. Prov. viii. xv. 22, 23: and the glorious gospel which unfolds the prophecy, exhibits a page illumined by the beams of that majesty and honour, which, ere long, will be universally displayed in "the King of kings, the Lord of lords." He cometh, and "every eye shall see him." Rev. i. 7. He cometh, and "every creature shall bow before him." Jude 14, 15. 2 Thess. i. 6—10. He cometh, and "the earth shall *rejoice* before him." Psalm xcvi. 1.

An attentive perusal of the book of revelation must needs fill the mind with this animating subject; neither will any scripturally-informed

believer doubt the fact that ere long this song shall be heard : “ the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.” Rev. xi. 15—17. It must also be understood that this reign is in consequence of the *redemption*, a reign over a *purchased* possession,—over the earth recovered out of the hand of the enemy,—over creation visibly *restored* to its original owner.

There are many important passages wherein the Holy Ghost clearly reveals this design. The promise is given, that in the *establishment* of Messiah’s kingdom, paradisaical peace and plenty, along with prevailing holiness and righteousness among the sons of men, shall cover the earth ; and that according to the promise made to Christ, he shall reign as Lord, acknowledged, adored, and loved, from pole to pole. “ Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth.” Isaiah xlv. 17. “ The wolf shall dwell with the Lamb,” &c. &c. Isa. xi. 6—9. “ And the Lord shall be king over all the earth ; in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name One.” Zec. xiv. 9. The promise is taken up by the Apostle Peter in his second epistle iii. 11—13 ; and again, in Rev. xxi. 1—5. Precious proclamation ! whereby

the church is animated with blissful assurances that ere long her Lord and Saviour will break forth in glory, and his redeeming power and grace be known and magnified.

The redemption of *the earth* is an article in the covenant which is very interestingly connected with the subject of the Divine faithfulness, and in this point of view is most important. Thus were designs of bounty to man, and purposes of goodness and grace, *expressed* to him: *he* had a *grant* of the earth, and was invested with delegated lordship. True, he *forfeited* these, and God would be righteous were they for ever withdrawn, but the *redemption* may bring back the forfeited glory, and man may yet possess the earth and rise to dominion: he *shall* do so! “The earth hath he given to the children of men.” Psalm cxv. 16, —a gift that is not reversed; we find it still in the memorial of the Lord’s faithfulness; for David in Psalm viii. declares it still in force, whilst the Apostle in Heb. ii. 6—9, taking up this grant to man, as declared by David, shews how it is established by the *redemption*, inasmuch as Jesus having humbled himself, that he might exalt our nature to its primitive dignity, holds the promise for man in himself, and will, ere long, bestow it; so

that, standing in the relation of a Covenant-Head for his people, he has also become a Covenant Lord, and having first by *redemption* recovered the possession, will next by a free gift restore the possession so redeemed.

All this is very honourable to the Divine nature, very glorious to the Son of God, very confounding to the powers of darkness, and very rejoicing to the family of God. We consider, therefore, that as it is revealed, so it is to be believed, that there is a *universal redemption* of the earth; that is, that Christ, as Redeemer, hath purchased to himself the possession of the whole world, that in his covenant character he may rule all things; "all things being put under his feet." Ephes. i. 20—22; and that he may give a visible manifestation of his triumphs in the very region wherein the usurper has been owned, restoring creation to beauty and order, and consigning the destroyer to imprisonment and shame. Rev. xx. 1, 2.

In the history of the redemption already effected through the incarnation and sacrifice of the Son of God, we read of the accomplishment of "the fulness of time." "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under

the law, to redeem them that were under the the law." Gal. iv. 4, 5. For this "time" or period, believers looked and longed, and in the *first* advent embraced the promise: Luke ii. 28—30, 38. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet, saying, "Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Matt. i. 22, 23. The first advent of the Lord opened, as it were, the fountain-head from whence the river of life burst forth in the wilderness, and which has continued to flow in streams of increasingly diffusive happiness, and shall so flow until the stream becomes a river, and the river a sea, covering the whole earth with blessings. It is thus represented in Ezekiel xlvii. 2—5, along with the effects thereof, as in the sixth to twelfth verses of that chapter, agreeing with Rev. xxii. 1—4; so that, not contenting ourselves with that measure of glory which as yet has been attached to the gospel dispensation, we are taught to haste to another day of God, a *glorious* revelation of the redemption, in the *return* of our Redeemer and Lord. It is to this period no doubt that the Spirit points, in Ephes. i. 14, when, addressing persons *already*

acquainted with a redemption *already* fulfilled, the apostle bids them be patient and holy “ *until* the redemption,” that is, until the fulness of the recovered possession be come in.

There are many vast and wonderful particulars belonging to this general subject on which our future inquiry will turn: but for the present we may profitably engage our thoughts upon the greatness of wisdom and power which breaks forth in the book of revelation, as securing the divine purposes to the earth, and to the incarnate Lord of the earth. This view of the subject may likewise assist us in interpreting a few passages in the Scripture which are thought not easy to reconcile with the doctrine of special redemption; as, for example, the passage in 2 Pet. ii. 1. which describes those who *finally perish* as nevertheless *bought* by the Lord, (see the Scripture) so also in 1 Tim. iv. 10, wherein Christ is said to be “ the *Saviour* of all men, but specially of them that believe.” The redemption price being given for *the earth*, all its inhabitants are so far included, that they come under the *authority* of Christ as the purchaser. And also under the *government* of Christ as the Mediator;—hence all men are amenable to

him,—God hath committed all judgment to the Son. All providential mercies likewise are received from him, and all sparing compassions are consequent upon his present office as Mediator. In the exercise of this high sovereignty, Christ will continue to preserve the earth in its present condition, until the time come for the change for which he has redeemed it, when, as it is expressed in Heb. i. 11, 12, the earth and the heaven having waxed old shall perish ; and he shall change them ;—“ as a vesture shall He fold them up, and they shall be changed.” “ The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness ; but long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance,” 2 Pet. iii. 9 :—but this covenant being accomplished, the earth shall then be burned up, yielding to that new state of things of which the apostle is speaking.

Our affections ought to be in lively exercise, so as gratefully to commemorate the first Advent of Him for whom this longing desire of the church of old was ever alive. “ Oh that thou wert as my brother,” Cant. viii. 1, is the language of holy love, desiring the incarnation, and pleading for the fulfilment of

the promise in Eden. "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent." The longings of individuals likewise are fervently expressed, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord," Gen. xlix. 18. "Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion," Psalm xiv. 6; "this is all my salvation and all my desire." 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

This desire is accomplished. Abraham saw the day and was glad: he saw it by the anticipation of faith, which to him was the substance of things hoped for—the evidence of things not seen. And *we* have seen the day. "God manifest in the flesh," has been "seen by angels," and looked upon by them, 1 Tim. iii. 16. 1 John i. 1. And *our* faith, if genuine and scriptural, has beheld him in whom is life. We are required in this act of faith to unite the affection of praise; and if believers, we shall have brought an offering to our king, and have hailed him Lord! In proportion to our spiritual discernment of his glory, we shall not only bow before him in tributes of praise, but in the language of desire. The disposition of the faithful, in respect of the first, will be our disposition in respect of the second Advent. Our cry will be, "Oh that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down,"

Isaiah lxiv. 1. "Come quickly, Lord Jesus," Rev. xxii. 20. And our attitude will be "looking for and hasting to the day of God." These are desires which one might suppose must necessarily mingle with our acceptance of the doctrine of *redemption*, whether it respects the glory of Christ in the visible recovery of the earth, or in the various sublime accompaniments of that recovery in the redemption wrought for his people. Let us, therefore, give diligence in humility to be taught of God, and endeavour to meditate upon this subject in connection with the one preceding, and as forming a cheering revelation of the remedy for those evils which the first man procured, and of the recovery of those blessings which he lost.

III.—REDEMPTION OF THE CHURCH.

THE doctrine of *redemption* must still receive our attention. We have seen in what sense it describes the visible recovery of the earth at large to its rightful Lord ; and that it involves not only the present security of creation, as placed beneath the government of the Mediator, but that it is designed to produce ere long a glorious change in the face of nature,—so long clouded with sorrow, but soon to be brilliant in joy ! The glory thus reserved to Christ is to be attended with another kind of diadem ; for not only is He “ King of Kings and Lord of Lords,”—not only is He crowned with honour and majesty as Ruler and Judge,—but He is exalted as *Head* of a kingdom and people, in whom, and for whom, he peculiarly lives. There are remarkable expressions in the Scripture declarative of this great truth, particularly in the epistle to the Ephesians ; *the first chapter* of which exhibits Christ in

this two-fold relation to the earth. In the twenty-first verse, his exaltation as the covenant possessor of all creation is set forth : he is revealed as raised from the dead—set at the right hand of Jehovah in the heavenly places—far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come ; having all things put under his feet. The great end of this exaltation in his people is next set forth—“and gave him to be the head over all things *to the Church*, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all ;” verses 22, 23. The eighteenth verse speaks of this part of the purchased possession as the “*riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints*,” evidently intending that amidst all the varied glories belonging to the eternal Son as heir of all things, one glory exceedeth all, and that this is seen in the covenant purpose which has given him a race to be redeemed in an especial manner, and to be re-beautified after the original pattern of human kind. These are spoken of “as redeemed *from among men*,” Rev. xiv. 4 ;—as peculiarly interested in the mediatorial kingdom, “I pray for them : I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me ; for they are

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thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine ; and I am glorified in them," John xvii. 9, 10 ;—and again as Christ's for an *inheritance* which he should *purchase* with his blood, Eph. i. 7. "I lay down my life for the sheep," John x. 15. "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me." John xvii. 6.

That the redemption effected by Christ has peculiar reference to this part of His inheritance, is so plainly affirmed in these and similar passages, that a mind unsophisticated by the vain arguments of men or the reasonings of unbelief, must immediately admit that the testimony is scriptural ; admitting also the testimony which respects man's fallen condition, we receive it also as *reasonable*, and as a doctrine whereby alone the eternal purpose of God in forming man can be accomplished. The restoration of the vegetable and merely animal creation could not be sufficient for this end. The intelligent, the immortal creature must be restored—and this not as by mere possibility or probability, but by the determination of him who willeth the glory to Christ. He is to be the foundation and the top-stone of a temple, built up in him, and complete in him, Eph. ii. 20—22. He is to be head of a body knit unto him, made one with him, and

entire in every part, Col. i. 18 ; ii. 9, 10 : such an entireness as is expressed by styling this whole body, consisting of the Head and all the members, "CHRIST," 1 Cor. xii. 12. The church so formed is styled "the *fulness* of him that filleth all in all," Eph. i. 23 ; that is, the *perfection* of this *church* is necessary to his perfection, as He is her Head and Lord ; were she to lack any excellence or any member, He could not in his relative glory be full or complete ; and hereby the fulness of the *redemption* is made known, the redeeming work of Christ being with special intention to recover individuals composing this body. How sublimely is the subject revealed to us in that holy rapture expressed by the Apostle, when he contemplated the glory into which angels desire to look, shewing how, by the development of God's will in the recovery of sinners to himself, the sovereignty of grace shineth forth, and the power of the redemption is seen ! "for which cause," as he declares, "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." Eph. i. 3—15. And how unfeignedly will every humbled soul desire to unite in views thus honourable to the work of Christ, and assuring to the hearts of saints.

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The first promise made to man engaged that the Saviour should bruise the head of the enemy, that is, crush his power; this victory was not to be obtained without suffering to the victor, and the heel that crushed the foe was to receive a bruise. The *redemption* was thus proclaimed, and Messiah, the great deliverer of men—delivering by death—was thus declared. The glorious results of this victory are opened out in revelations that connect the gospel plan with the rule ordained in paradise. The first Adam stood as a representative head of the human race, and by his obedience or transgression his children were blessed or cursed. As a representative he was false to the trust, and involved his descendants in the sentence of death. “In Adam all die,” 1 Cor. xv. 22. A second Adam is provided to stand as a representative head; by his obedience or fall, his seed were to be saved or lost; as a representative he was true to the trust, and his children live. The first Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit, 1 Cor. xv. 45: thus, “as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive;” that is, in a representative. By the offence of one, death reigned by one, Rom. v. 17, 18, by the righteousness of one, the free

gift cometh to justification of life ; “ for as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” Rom. v. 19. The Spirit, testifying of Jesus, instructs the Christian in this the glorious doctrine of salvation, shewing him how Christ given in this character is to the believer such a representative as secures him for ever. All that was wrought by Christ is put to the account of his redeemed. He came as “ made under the law to redeem them that were under the law,” Gal. iv. 5, and to take for himself a portion out of the lost world to be to him for an inheritance,—for this end, receiving into himself all their responsibilities. Such is the word of inspiration. “ He is our peace.” “ In him is life.” “ By him we are reconciled.” “ We have redemption in his blood.” “ He hath obtained eternal redemption for us.” “ We are baptized into his death.” “ We are risen with him.” “ He hath made us to sit with him in heavenly places in Christ.” All these are consequent upon the covenant purpose to give him to be the Head of a mystical body, that in that body the riches of the glory of his inheritance might consist and be exhibited. The redemption of the *earth* is a great and glorious work ; but this

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redemption hath an end. The mediatorial reign will continue in the present state of things until the fulness of the time, when, as we read, the Lord, who is not slack concerning his promise, will cause the heavens and the earth which now are, to pass away, bringing in the promised change, 2 Peter iii. 7, 9, 13; but that change also will yield to another dispensation, when, at the close of one thousand years, the kingdom shall be delivered up: according to 1 Cor. xv. 23; "Every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's, at his coming;" (agreeing with Rev. xx. 4, 6.) "Then cometh the end," (agreeing with Rev. xx. 5.) "when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." See 1 Cor. xv. 23—28. The *mediatorial* kingdom, therefore, hath an end: and whatever may be the intention of God respecting the continuance of the earth as a redeemed world; at the close of the thousand years, we clearly learn that the great end for which it was created will have been answered, and the whole plan of redemption have been consummated by the completion of the number

of the sons and daughters of the Lord, Rev. xx. 7, 10, 11, 15. But for these sons and daughters there is an *eternity* of blessedness—*their* redemption is an everlasting redemption; they are “bought with a price” to be the peculiar treasure of the Redeemer; He maketh them kings and priests unto God: they shall reign with him forever, and they shall appear as a royal diadem in the hand of their God.

In respect of these the redemption is of vast extent. They are themselves the subjects of this work of grace; body and soul are alike interested in the purchase, “Ye are *bought* with a price, wherefore glorify God in your *bodies* and in your *spirits*, which are *his*.” Their inheritance is likewise a redeemed possession, procured for them and held for them by the Redeemer, who has for us entered in once into the holy place with his own blood, as the Forerunner of his people, and as their accepted representative on high. Their present privileges are likewise *redeemed* enjoyments: He hath redeemed them from the curse of the law, that they might receive the *adoption* of sons; and having the spirit of adoption, be privileged to cry Abba, Father. He is already glorified in them; although not sufficiently indeed in the eyes of the world,

yet in the world of spirits they are the objects of perpetual interest, being “a spectacle to angels,”—ministering angels of light delighting to behold them as the purchase of the blood of their adored Lord—and assailing spirits of darkness receiving through them perpetual shame, and abiding foretastes of the final triumph they will obtain. The divine presence, too, is turned upon them with complacent love, they are “accepted in the beloved;” and as the monuments of grace shewing forth the virtue of redeeming blood, they are looked upon with rejoicing by Jehovah himself, “He will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.” Zeph. iii. 9. The glory of Christ’s inheritance in his people is not therefore wholly hid, nor wholly reserved for the coming day when he will be glorified in his saints, and admired in them that believe, for even now his praise is heard in the invisible world, angels uniting with the departed spirits to cry, “Hallelujah”—“Blessing and glory and honour be unto the Lamb.”

It is reasonable, however, as well as scriptural, to expect a yet more glorious manifestation. The redemption is a work too vast, too marvellous, too divine, to be veiled. *Every eye must see him who died to save.* The in-

fidel, the scoffer, the contemptuous must *feel* their shame and proclaim their confusion. The decree is written, "Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Heb. i. 13. "He shall break them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Psalm ii. 9. "They shall say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." Rev. vi. 16. "He shall arise, and his enemies be scattered." Psalm lxxviii. 1. The shame and calumny now cast upon the cross will then be rolled away; its wonders and virtues will then be unquestionable; and the redeemed of the Lord will then "look forth like the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." Can. vi. 18. *All the relative* wonders belonging to the redemption of the Lord's inheritance will be revealed. Every promise made in the oath of the covenant will be fulfilled, and whatever belongs to the Redeemer's triumph *for* his people in heaven, earth, or hell—or *in* his people in body, mind, or soul—will break forth in glory and power, attended with the groans and shrieks of vanquished enemies, and with the shouts and hosannahs of crowned friends. "I heard a

great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Hallelujah ! salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God : he hath avenged the blood of his servants, Hallelujah ! Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Hallelujah ! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him : for the *marriage of the Lamb is come*, and his wife hath made herself ready." Rev. xix. 1—7. In the prophetic warning and counsel of our Lord, this prospect is so used by him for his people, "Then lift up your heads, for your *redemption* draweth nigh." Luke xxi. 28. Then will our Lord appear in his glory, the glory he had before the world was in this his relation to creation, and in this his unchangeableness to his church,—and delivering in the portion committed unto him, will say, "Here am I, and the children whom thou hast given me." And "of them which thou gavest me, have I lost none."

It will not be suitable in this chapter to anticipate the doctrines we propose to examine, by entering further into this branch of the

subject. The impression to be left upon our understandings and affections from what has thus far been stated, refers *chiefly to Christ*, as glorified in the *redemption*, whether considered in its *general* or *special* character. And the *fruit* should be,—increase of admiration directed to Jehovah, the God of salvation,—love and zeal for the eternal Son, by whom such a salvation has been wrought,—and preparation of mind to an enlarged sense of the glorious office of the Holy Ghost, by whom this revelation is given, and in whose omnipotent grace it is effectually applied to the redeemed. Our meditations, therefore, have food for their exercise and for their growth; and if such subjects be received in faith, we shall experimentally know that they are purifying and elevating in their tendency. They are calculated to bring us out from such a confined view of the benefits of redemption, as puts us into the danger of being, in measure at least, *selfish* even on Christian ground; and they provide matter whereon the affections may feed in a holy disinterestedness. Not that we can separate the glory of Christ from our glory, nor the excellence of the redemption from the blessedness of the redeemed; but we shall be disposed to turn our eyes in

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simplicity *most* upon Him, the *object* of faith, and thence to derive our individual enjoyments and hope. Be this our aim ! let us read the Scriptures with diligent search after this precious revelation, and ask the operation of the Spirit for the power to say, “ I know that *my* Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand in the latter day upon the earth.” Job xix. 25.

IV.—THE ELECTION IN CHRIST JESUS.

SUCH truths as we have already examined necessarily lead us onwards to further wonders of the everlasting salvation that is in Jesus Christ, and bring us to the conclusion, that the redemption established in the person and work of Christ involves the great question of an *Election* in Him. On this fact the book of inspiration speaks with undeviating simplicity. Here we learn, that since it hath pleased God to undertake the recovery of the sinner, so likewise hath it pleased him to determine who shall be so recovered ; he will ensure the honor of his purpose—he will determine the glory of Christ—he will establish the expectations of his redeemed. In order to these great resolves, we shall perceive an election to be necessary, and a little inquiry and reflection will convince us that it is also

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an expression and exhibition of matchless wisdom and grace.

Accepting the doctrine of the *fall* of man, we necessarily admit that in order to his restoration, he must be *lifted* up. Believing that in the fall he lost every spiritual capability of action before God, we conclude that he is not *able* to raise up himself. Receiving the assertion of the Scriptures, that man is in determined enmity against his God, we acknowledge that it were *unreasonable* to imagine that he will voluntarily return to his Maker, or desire communion with the God whom he forsook. Reading the testimony, “Ye are *dead* in trespasses and sins,” we dismiss from our expectation any idea of spiritual *movement*, to be evinced by a creature thus lifeless.

That these great articles of faith are exhibited in the Bible cannot be denied ; for the Holy Ghost has in merciful faithfulness expounded to man the extent of his misery as a rebel and alien, and has concluded *all* under sin, under curse, and in hopeless ruin ; shewing us that the whole earth is corrupt, and that there is none that doeth good, none that seeketh after God.

It were profitable to us to meditate in simplicity of mind upon such revelations, and

to bring ourselves to an understanding of the nature and extent of human corruption : were this awful truth well understood and humbly experienced, we should be possessed of clear and irresistible confirmation of the doctrine of election, as not only desirable, but necessary, in order to the salvation of any individual sinner. We are not to be surprised that the doctrine is generally denied, dreaded, and caluminated. It suits not the pride and independence of a haughty transgressor, thus utterly to deprive man of boasting, and thus wholly to give glory to God's sovereignty. And a blind sinner, to whom the things of God are foolishness, must be supposed ready with his sophistical arguments, or proud resentment, to stand out against the proclamation heard from heaven, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." We are unwilling to believe that we are so *entirely* lost—we would fain hope that there remaineth *some* good thing within us—at least the ability to *will* what is good ; and we labour, by subtle pretence of zeal for the honour of the divine name, and the establishment of divine justice, to throw down the doctrine of the election of God, and in its place to substitute the will of man. Sad exchange to such as have any

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perception of the excellence of the one, and the impotence of the other! Were the plain declaration of God accepted, we could not thus wander in paths of error, we should be assured that "it is not in man to direct his own way," and that it is not in man even to desire the *holy* way. "It is God that worketh in us to *will* and to *do*." Phil. ii. 13. Did we yield a listening ear, we could not be unacquainted with the word which, addressing the church of Christ, calls her a *chosen* Spouse, and reminds her that all her members are fashioned by the almighty power of that God, by whose sovereign will they have been chosen and set apart from all eternity. Let some of these proclamations and addresses receive our present attention. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter i. 2. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." 1 Peter ii. 9, 10. "They that follow the Lamb are called, and chosen, and faithful." Rev. xvii. 14. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."

John xv. 16. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." Ephes. i. 4. "We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because that God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation." 2 Thess. ii. 13. "Knowing brethren, beloved, your election of God." 1 Thess. i. 4. These are plain words, easy of comprehension, manifestly establishing the fact that there is *an election*.

The *eternity* of the election is likewise as plainly revealed. These words are very explicit, "I have loved thee with an *everlasting* love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Jer. xxxi. 3. It is true that they are words addressed to ancient Israel, but they contain the covenant truth, verified to all the spiritual seed. We read in 2 Tim. i. 9. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own *purpose* and *grace*, which was *given us in Christ Jesus before the world began*." Our Lord is everywhere presented as a *provision* made from all eternity for the work of salvation. "His goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,

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even from everlasting to everlasting, thou *art* God. Thou, Lord, hast been our dwelling-place in all generations," see Psalm xc. 1, 2, —the dwelling-place, wherein the chosen treasure is deposited; where, as in a cabinet, the hidden ones are shut up and sealed and secure: "*preserved* in Christ." Jude 1. In accordance with this truth, it is said of the Lord's people, that they are written in the Lamb's book of life, Rev. xiii. 8. Phil. iv. 3. —written in heaven. Heb. xii. 23. And thus consistently with the doctrine of human apostasy, and of divine election, we read that "we love God, *because* he first loved us." 1 John iv. 19.

That the election is according to a purpose established in Christ, which acts irrespectively of any procuring cause in the subjects of the election, is also to be understood. Of Israel we have no hesitation in believing the propriety and justice of the memorial, which speaks on this wise, "The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people, for ye were the fewest of all people, but because he loved you," Deut. vii. 7, 8; nor yet, because though few in number, they were multiplied in excellence and worth, for of Israel it is de-

clared that they were a stiff-necked generation, perverse, provoking, and rebellious. The testimony of the chosen in every nation runs in a parallel line with this history of Israel, if we compare with it 1 Cor. i. 26—28. And the work of the Spirit in the hearts of the elect answers to the word, producing in all such the sense of total unworthiness, and the dispositions of wonder and prostration before the God of their life—just as in the case of the apostle : “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom *I am* chief.” 1 Tim. i. 15.

Much more of Scripture statement might be produced, in order to exhibit these particulars, namely, that there is an election ; that the election is from all eternity ; and that it is irrespective of desert in the elected objects, and according to the sovereign will of God. But more need not be adduced to a simple-minded inquirer,—to such it will be enough to discover that “*it is written.*”

A powerful and conclusive argument is, however, derived in confirmation of this doctrine, from the nature of the undertaking of Christ. We cannot imagine that so vast a scheme of mercy as is arranged in Him should

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lie at the disposal of man, or be at the option of the creature, whether it should be in any instance availing. This were to make it possible that the incarnation, obedience, death, resurrection, ascension, and reign of Christ might all be a *vain experiment*, and that after all the expence of wisdom, love, and suffering manifested by the Lord, he might remain, in respect of the earth, *alone* ; without one jewel wherewith to form a crown ; without one star whereby to illumine his spiritual heaven. Possibilities of this description can never be attributable to divine counsels. Neither can they be attached to Jesus' work. The counsel of the Lord shall stand, and the work of Jesus shall prevail ; and as many as are ordained to eternal life, *shall* be added to the church. Acts iv. 47. But we speak not of mere *possibilities*, we come to certain conclusions, that were the gospel proposed and pressed upon the acceptance of man, upon however greatly advantageous terms, or in however advantageous circumstances, it would be universally rejected and despised ; it being inconsistent to suppose it possible that man, in his native loathings of God, and of gospel means of life, should voluntarily, out of his own unsanctified will and affection, make choice of such a ser-

vice. God's hands would be stretched out all the long day of this world's being, "to a disobedient and gainsaying people."

The election secures the contrary. Jesus says, "All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me." John vi. 37. His royal diadem is held in the everlasting counsels, beyond the reach of change, of accident, or loss; and when he cometh in glory to display His Kingly strength, it will be seen that his brow is adorned with this imperishable memorial of the changeless covenant in him. The prophetic narration of Jesus's vicarious sufferings assures us of the certainty of the results; and drawing aside the veil from the bloody offering, shews us, not only the pains endured, but the purchase made. Iniquity by imputation was laid upon him, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "He bare the sin of many." "He made his soul an offering for sin." These testimonies of redeeming love are then closed by the testimony of the Redeemer's contentment, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be *satisfied*." See Isa. liii. The description we have of the coming day agrees in style with this doctrine. "He shall send his angels, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds." Matt.

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xxiv. 31. "Shall not God avenge his own elect." Luke xviii. 7. "For the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Matt. xxiv. 22. "Having loved his own, he loved them to the end." "I go, saith he, to prepare a place for you. And "I will come again, and receive you to myself." See John xiv. 2, 3.

Surely, to the disciples of Jesus, whatever gives glory to their Lord, must be acceptable; and where can we find a greater provision for this glory than in the doctrine before us? It at once yields unto him the honour of which he is jealous, and for which we should pray. It proclaims him all-powerful, unchanging, victorious over all that opposeth him, and displays him in his seat of glory, as the life of men. It at once exhibits the excellence of his person and work, in that he is entrusted with the eternal interests of a people, specially precious in Jehovah's sight; being able and willing to save them to the uttermost. It exalts the Divine nature before the whole creation, by shewing the sovereignty, the love, the wisdom of God; and also exhibits the human nature assumed by him, as answering the end of a representative head of a body for which he must suffer and obey. And no doubt it will be in and through this mystical

body of Christ, so created, redeemed, and preserved, that the glorious Godhead will eternally shew forth the Divine perfection to all intelligences above, "All mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them." "And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one. Father, I will that they also which thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." John xvii. 10, 21—24.

Objections to the doctrine vanish before these considerations; in place of them, grateful admiration springs, and we exclaim, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! for who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." Rom. xi. 33—36.

This doctrine is as a covenant-cloud from which drops of sweetest consolation fall upon

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the soul of man : while it deprives him of all power of self-glory in God's sight, it invests him with the privilege of hope, even in circumstances most desperate. The Apostle brings himself forward as a *pattern* for them that should after believe. Mercy shewn to him who was before a persecutor and blasphemer, speaks the power of Christ to save, and the freeness of the saving act. Mercy traced up to this Fountain-head, and seen to be *kept* for the chosen of God, enlivens expectation ; for the promise is, " My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him." Psalm lxxxix. 28. The whole of the psalm referred to treats of this eternal counsel, for the comfort of such as have no other hope, and by exhibiting the source of all power in the Lord alone, generates humble confidence in God. How strong the consolation likewise to such as are possessed of experience ! Their many dangers from the world, their continual assaults suffered from Satan, their own indwelling corruption, their many, many unanswerable accusers—how are these to be encountered ? To such as understand the subject, vain is the hope of escape or security, but as the eternal love of God in Christ is seen ! The promise,

“ I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee : ” the pledge, “ My sheep shall never perish : ” the challenge, “ Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect ? ” the assurance, “ the Lord knoweth them that are his ; ” these are the consolatory and supporting truths on which God’s child depends, and without which he would faint and fall. “ I had utterly fainted, but that I believed verily to see the salvation of God.” Psalm xxvii. 13.

Nor is it only to the convinced sinner, or to the experienced saint, that this doctrine holds forth encouragement. There is such an unhappy case as that of a backslider ; of one in spiritual declension. By what argument shall such an one be prevailed upon to return, or be addressed with words of encouragement ? He is disposed to question his own sincerity, to distrust his own resolves, to argue himself into despondency, and to say, “ There is no hope ; I have loved strangers, and after them I will go.” And where is the cord to throw around his desperate soul ? where the argument by which to hold him back in hope ? None other is proposed in the Lord’s word but this : “ Return unto me, *for* I have redeemed *thee*.” “ I will heal thy backslidings and love thee freely.” “ Thou hast undone

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thyself, but in me is thy help." "I the Lord *change* not." Through these proclamations the Spirit communicates the balm of the covenant, and, by reminding the transgressor of the *everlasting* love which the Lord expresses towards his children, puts in the further recollection, that if *thus* loved, his wretched soul may still have hope. Out of these views he obtains arguments with which to draw near to his God, and which he closes with the wrestling plea for restoration to his smile, "Heal me, O Lord, for I have sinned against thee: Comfort the soul of thy servant." "Seek me, for I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost."

Whilst in this manner endeavouring to obtain confirmation or instruction in the subject of the Election in Christ, may we have grace to *apply* what we discover to our own souls. Let us give glory to Christ by admitting that there is no power in us to think a good thought as of ourselves. If such a good thought has arisen in us, which may be acceptable to God, let us say, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be the praise." If we possess the testimony within us, that the operation of the Spirit has been extended to us, let us strive to cherish that witness in all holiness,

that we may enter into the privilege described in 2 Cor. i. 21, "Now he which stablisheth us in Christ and hath anointed us is God; who hath sealed us and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our heart." And seeing that so much of glory to God is involved in the consistency of his people, let us diligently and gratefully accept the apostle's exhortation, "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering," Col. iii. 12, remembering the beautiful connection in which the doctrines are linked together in the Scriptures and enjoined on men, "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his: And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity." 2 Tim. ii. 19.

V.—PREDESTINATION.

IN connection with the doctrine of an election in Christ, is that of predestination.

Predestination signifies that determining purpose of God whereby a certain issue or accomplishment of his will is ensured; it respects the glory of Christ in the church, and is a term used in scripture as descriptive of the privileged condition of God's people. These are, according to what has been shewn, "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world," Ephes. i. 5; but they are chosen to a certain end—"being *predestinated* according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Ephes. i. 11. As objects *elected* by the sovereignty of the divine purpose—they are persons *ordained* for the Divine glory; so that whatever may be considered requisite for the furtherance of the *Lord's honour* in them, is settled

by a predestinating resolve on the part of the Lord. This is stated in Rom. viii. 28—30 : “ All things work together for good to them that love God ; to them who are the called according to his purpose : for whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.” “ Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” Thus the Lord Jesus, as the Author and also the Finisher of our faith, wrought out a *finished salvation*, for a people *ordained* to the inheritance, as is declared in Ephes. i. 11.

It is very important that we should have a right understanding of this doctrine. Along with every other revelation which exalts the sovereignty of God, it has its determined adversaries, and is frequently not only misrepresented, but misunderstood. Men usually reprobate the notion, as a mere opinion of men ; or, as necessarily involving the awful conclusion of God’s being the author of evil, or of a cruel decree, dooming creatures to an irresistible course of sin and destruction. It is rashly contended that according to such a doctrine individuals are reprobated by a *posi-*

tive decree on the part of the Almighty, preventing the movements of repentance, or the possibility of their return to God. And that others, the subjects of election, are saved, not only by the determinate counsel of God, but irrespective of any work of sanctification to be wrought in them.

These are erroneous statements and prejudices. The condition of man is *already reprobate*; but what is the signification of this word? It signifies *unprofitable*, that which when tried betrays itself as being adulterated, mixed with alloy. Thus the apostle speaks, Titus i. 16, "they profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work *reprobate*." So the prophet uses the term "*reprobate silver* shall men call them:" Jer. vi. 30. Men come into the world as a profitless soil, producing only the briar and the thorn, and left to themselves they *continue* reprobate, in this sense; needing no positive impelling will on the part of this holy and righteous God to cause them to pursue their own way of unrighteousness. They receive the due reward of their deeds, and in their condemnation are consigned as reprobate or *unprofitable* to the endless burnings. "Cast

ye the *unprofitable* servant into outer darkness." The passive permitting will of God is indeed in some awful instances attended with a further expression of *active* judgment, even in this world, in cases where the high provocation of transgressors moves the indignation of the Almighty God to raise up monuments of his wrath, and to exhibit to sinners *beacons* of warning. Thus Pharaoh, Sihon, Judas, and others, were reprobated by the sentence of the Almighty. Thus Sodom, Gomorrah, and Jerusalem, were consigned to impenitence, and the things of mercy or of peace, hid from their eyes. And thus in all periods, examples may be made of such as having trodden under foot the Son of God, may inherit, even here, the fearful forebodings of eternal burnings, Heb. x. 26. But these are not to be considered as *predestinated* from all eternity, by God's active decree, to reach such an end! They follow the bent of their own evil inclinations in serving sin, and it is as *sinners* that they perish; or, they resist the light afforded to them, by a proud and infidel controversy with the Lord, and as rebels of a monstrous description, they receive a sentence proportioned to their crime. The law of the infinite Lawgiver has its penalties; the prison

of eternal judgment is *prepared* for the devil and for every adversary of God; and we believe that the determining will of God has determined the end of every man dying an enemy to God, to be that place of torment; although we do not believe the predestinating will of God to be the cause of the continuance of that enmity. In this sense “ he *willeth not* the death of a sinner.”

The case is very different with the objects of Divine love. Towards them a decree exists wherewith also the *positive will* of the Almighty is connected: just as the passage in Rom. viii, already referred to declares. It is impossible that we can separate the revelation of human apostacy and of an election in Christ, from that of predestination, since a dead sinner being incapable of exercising spiritual functions, and being alive only through the grace that is by an election, possesses a new life, *given* for *God's* glory, and *dependent* upon God's faithfulness. Now the divine *faithfulness* can never fail! The divine purpose to glorify the everlasting name cannot be rendered abortive! Hence the *end* of his work must be sure, and individuals so distinguished must come under that powerful operation of the Spirit which maintains them

in their supernatural life. In accordance with this, we find the various privileges belonging to the church of Christ enumerated as blessings to which the redeemed are *predestinated*, their present experience of *adoption*, their progressive increase in conformity to the image of their Lord, their victory over the world, their inheritance beyond present scenes, are all possessions treasured up for them in Christ Jesus, and imparted to them by the unchanging will of God. Thus the tribute of gratitude burst from the Apostle, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that *we should be* holy and without blame before him in love; having *predestinated* us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." Ephes. i. 3—5. Then follows the enumeration of other covenant blessings into which the heirs of glory are brought by the *same* counsel or predestinating will. The same doctrine is exhibited in Ephes. iii. 9—11, wherein the glory of our covenant-head, Christ Jesus, is brought forward as involving by a holy necessity, this

eternal purpose towards those who are interested in him.

That the active operation of the will of God is *necessary* for the furtherance of his gracious designs in his people, the experience of every believer will quickly determine; and for their consolation they have the assurance that he who has begun the good work in them will complete it also. The *perseverance* of the saints is pledged by the Lord; it belongs to his predestinating will. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning." The existence of the believer is contemplated by him as a *whole* in respect of this work. And although this life is gradually developed, he who imparteth it beholdeth it as his offspring—a child, ere long, to be perfected in glory. This is *strong* consolation! Whatever may be the nature of our warfare as Christians, it assures us of *victory*! Our conflicts entered, without this cordial, would leave us faint and weary; and however uprightly we might struggle, or habitually prevail, we could not be possessed of the *stability* of hope. But when in times of temptation and seasons of alarm, we call to remembrance that we were born again of the Spirit and appointed to this very end, and that through these exercises we

should attain to holiness and glory, we are animated in our warfare and the shout of a king is amongst us. Our bosom sin may distress, but we know it cannot destroy, for God hath *predestinated* our triumph! “Sin *shall not have dominion* over you!” “The elder shall serve the younger!” and the Spirit, as the covenant supplanter, shall finally invest us with perfect liberty. Our cruel adversaries in the world, and from the pit of darkness, may assail, and fiery darts may come thick upon us, but the predestinating purpose of God will be our shield and buckler; “we are more than conquerors through him that hath loved us.” Trouble and affliction may swell, like rising billows ready to drown us in their depths, but the predestinating counsel will uphold us. “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of all.” And neither things present, nor things to come, (whatever terrible aspect they may assume) shall be able to separate the saints from the love of God. Rom. viii. 35—39.

These are not uninfluential opinions; their Divine characters are displayed not only in the Scriptures, but in the fruits they produce. Were *strong consolation* the only fruit, we

might be less confident, perhaps, of their *holy* tendency; but when the doctrine is applied to a heart experienced through the teachings of the Holy Ghost, results of a very high and sacred nature are to be seen. *Animated* as well as comforted, the believer is made vigorous to undertake or to meet whatever comes in the way of duty, and keeping the eye of faith upon the *end* which *God* has in view, the intervening events are received as the way by which that purpose of love is to be wrought. In this strain the suffering and labouring disciple is addressed, — 1 Cor. xv. 57, 58; “Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Therefore*, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in *vain* in the Lord.” Observation of the church will confirm the fact; we have seen in all ages her resolute, arduous, and buoyant course; we have heard her confident and exulting strain. She has looked forth fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners, deriving her confidence from the *counsels of God*, and waging her war as beneath the standard of the Captain of *Salvation*. *Individuals* of the

mystical body possess the same privilege, and when apprehending the doctrine under consideration, they are strong to tread the perilous way, and bold to meet the resisting foe. Holy arguments arise within whereby to silence the fears of nature, and to stir up the actings of faith. What a powerful motive is possessed by such an one, when he can say in answer to his accusers or to his tempter, but—I am predestinated to holiness—I am predestinated to victory—I am predestinated to tread upon Satan, to put off my *body of death*, to reach a glorious inheritance. “I know that *my* Redeemer liveth:” that “there is laid up for *me* a crown.”

Our own interest in such consolation should be a subject of serious and grateful meditation. If, as believers, we have embraced the Lord, we have laid hold upon all that he is made unto his people. And, tracing back our past experience, we shall be able, by looking into what the Lord *has* wrought, to anticipate with more lively affection, what in faithfulness he will still do. The doctrines of grace form so many links of one great chain, and when received in their holy connection, prove a chain of love, wherewith we are bound to him who first loved us. An examination of them separately, and

then in the whole, will be establishing to knowledge and to peace, and will assuredly prove constraining likewise to *sanctity* of life and conversation. All Jehovah's ways are holy, and all his redeemed inheritance in the elect must be holy. "I have chosen you (said our Lord) and ordained you that you should bring forth much fruit." The fruit is seen—believers appear as the invigorated branches of the Living Vine, and the predestinating will of God is glorified by the richness, fragrance, and profit of the heirs of its grace.

It will be found enriching to our souls to turn to this subject with a lowly prayerful heart, asking the Holy Ghost to be our teacher, and abiding by the Scriptures as our rule. The doctrine will not be stripped of its *mysterious* character, but it will appear in its glory, as giving supreme honour to the unchangeable and omnipotent Jehovah, and as opening for the church a reviving, animating stream, which flows from the bosom of the Eternal One, through the channel of the redemption in Christ; and wherever it yields its waters in the Spirit's grace, producing the aspect of a bed of flowers, or a garden lively in health, and fruitful. An *abuse* of the doctrine may indeed be made by men of ungodly minds—

but this is *their sin*; the truth remains, and remains as a holy consolation for sanctified souls, in a holy Lord.

May we unite the subjects we have passed through, and in *spirit* be able to appropriate the covenant life.

VI.—THE NEW BIRTH.

THE truths already exhibited may have been sufficient to assure us, that in the Church of Jehovah *salvation* is prepared for sinful men, in the *person* and *work* of a Great Deliverer; and that salvation is the sure inheritance of a people whom the Lord loveth as his own chosen portion. The divine purposes, however, whilst unchanging, and freely expressed to sinners, are *holy* in all their operation; and individuals partaking of the privileges described, are therefore brought into a peculiar existence under that regenerating power, styled in the Scripture, a new creation, or new birth. This supernatural change of state and character is essentially necessary in every point of view. The divine will *towards* the elect, the divine glory to be displayed *in them*, the glorious dignity *prepared* for them, all require that they should

themselves pass under an operation by which these purposes of God may be verified. Whatever might be conceived of the sovereignty and grace of Jehovah, in the election and predestination by which a sinner is saved from everlasting destruction, we cannot be satisfied without some revelation to assure us that the holiness and sanctity of the divine name are preserved conspicuous. This cannot be on the supposition that one so vile as man, so devoid of spiritual appetite, and so lost to every thing holy, should be received into the region of light and love, whilst continuing in his corruption. What fellowship hath light with darkness? What concord can there be betwixt Christ and Belial? These two extremes can never unite—the Lord is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. His countenance of complacent regard can never rest with approbation upon the soul and body of a creature defiled and diseased by sin; true—the provision of atoning blood and justifying righteousness will wash away the guilt and cover the short-comings, and in this part of the covenant a sinner may look for divine approbation, so far as his pardoned and justified state are in question: but there is an *inward* man, there are inward dispositions, appetites,

and affections ; these, in their native state, are “earthly, sensual, devilish,” they cannot aspire after heavenly joys ; they will not feed on the banquet of *spiritual* provision ; they do not bow in prostration of love before God’s throne ; therefore a sinner—unregenerated by the Holy Ghost—has no *meetness* for the eternal inheritance on high, and no *capacity* for *enjoyment* in that world of light. How is this meetness, this capacity, to be possessed ? Are we to imagine that by the mere circumstance of the separation of soul and body in death, the creature of God will be purified, and delivered from his native propensities to rebel ? Are we to think that by some self-inflicted penance, or some imposed restraint, the internal state of a man may be so changed, as that his bosom shall become a meet dwelling-place for God ? Or, is it by the labour of education, and the inculcating of moral precept, that new appetites and desires with heaven-directed tendency will arise ? Our experience, observation, and reason will *deny* that such possibilities can exist. We feel, notwithstanding all these endeavours, that the leopard retains his spots, the Ethiopian his skin, and that whatever may be the success of such means towards externally *whitening* the sepulchre, the inward cor-

ruption of spiritual death remains, and the soul is still sunk in the depths of alienation from God. Job, deeply convinced of this, exclaims, "If I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me: for he is not a man as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment," Job ix. 30—32. The requirement which the Lord has upon the heart, man's natural heart will not appreciate or accept; and never will the affections be restored to their proper Lord, until that Lord shall be pleased to replace them in their right direction by *renewing operations* wrought in them by the Holy Ghost. The words of our Lord are "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot *see* the kingdom of God:" and again, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot *enter* into the kingdom of God." John iii. 3—5. "That which is born of the *flesh is flesh*, and "they that are in the *flesh cannot* please God." Man in his unregenerate state doth not *perceive* the things of the Spirit of God, they are foolishness unto him; neither doth he turn towards the way of life. "Ye will not come unto me

that ye might have life." 'O Lord, I know that it is not in man to direct his way!' Thus instructed and enlightened, we do not find it difficult to receive these words of Christ—" *Marvel* not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again!"

There are some particulars in this doctrine that call for the exercise of a *discriminating* judgment. To be born again, is to be endowed with new life, a life imparted by Him who is *the* Life. It is consequently a life that is holy; and the new creature so produced being the offspring of the Holy Ghost, possesses, and will exhibit, all the lively features of the *new man*. It is described thus, "created anew *after* the image of him that redeemed us." Here we are reminded of the *redemption* through which Christ Jesus is Lord of a *new world*, Heb. ii. 5, embracing not only the earth and its inhabitants, but specially the Christian, according to the purpose, "the people that shall be *created* shall praise the Lord," Psalm cii. 18. Regeneration imparts to man a nature like that from which Adam fell, and although it be still encumbered and distressed by the *old*, which is corrupt, its own proper energies are all spiritual, and shall finally prevail. Its dispositions answer to the

Lord's demand upon the heart, and the sweetly expressive affection of a child to a parent springs forth in unfeigned, although it may be in feeble, expression ;—" because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, whereby ye cry, Abba, Father." It is not to be expected that the full development of this life will *immediately* appear ; but the movements which *are* expressed will be in character with its origin and end. The seed of a *flower* is perfect when sown, containing all its component parts, gradually unfolding themselves, until attaining to that full development which presents the perfect plant ; so in grace, the principle of the new life is perfect, but the development is gradual. This being true, we consider the act by which the regeneration is imparted to be *instantaneous*, there being no intermediate state between life and death. " And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins ;" Ephes. ii. 1—*quickened* by the energizing inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Thus, in 1 Peter i. 23, such favoured souls are said to be " born again, not of corruptible, but of incorruptible seed ;" so in the word of Christ spoken to Nicodemus, it is said, " that which is born of the Spirit is *Spirit*." Thus are its

nature and its continuance described ; whilst of its *effect* we read, “ if any man be in Christ he is a *new creature*—old things are passed away, behold all things are become new,” 2 Cor. v. 17.

The doctrine rightly understood will yield not only most awakening considerations, but great consolation also. We can have no hesitation in affirming that without the new birth no man can be saved—this is the clear testimony of the Scripture. And if we receive revelation with faith, such a declaration must needs turn us upon the serious investigation of our own state before God. The human mind is fearfully endangered by prejudice, which, according to its constitutional tendencies, it readily admits. Some men will adhere to the hope of finding favour with God by the decorations which they gather from the *desert* ; that is, from the world—from “ beggarly elements,” or from their own virtue and morality. Others, disdaining this expectation as altogether legal and ignorant, betake themselves to the doctrine of grace, in the free salvation of a covenant which they use with a deceptive *partiality* ; accepting the glorious revelation of life in a *substitute*, and the enrapturing view of the unchangeableness of a

covenant Lord, but overlooking, undervaluing, or denying the work of the Spirit in the *regeneration* of the soul. Some will professedly admit this doctrine, but dress it up in a fashion of carnal invention, stripping it of those substantial ornaments with which the Scriptures endow it, and denying the *progress* of grace towards maturity. These are fatal mistakes, and we should open our eyes to the rocks against which too many have struck, and made shipwreck of faith, and of a good conscience. A saving knowledge of Christ is attendant on a new birth. They who have right or power by the Spirit to call themselves Sons of God, "are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," John i. 13. Such as are born of God are *conformed* to God, their high privilege being largely unfolded in 1 John iii. 7—9, and 1 John v. 3, 4; and their course through the world being fraught with peculiar excellences, the gift of their Lord, and an honour to his name. "They shall be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified." "This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise."

Consolation of the purest kind attends this doctrine: no doubt it will immediately appear

to the believer, that to be enabled to call upon God as a Father is to possess every thing essential to happiness. In his parental love the soul can rest ; it opens a bosom wherein all riches of uncreated and endless fulness are laid up, and whereon the cherished offspring of his grace may confidently recline ; with such a possession, poverty, pain, distress, either cease, or are sweetly assuaged : and one who understands any thing of the nature of such a relation, will be ready with simplicity of heart's desire to say,—Give me but this privilege, O my God, and I need ask no more ! And *are we* ready with this word of holy desire ? This looks like filial love ! The infant in the midst of its unconsciousness of the *nature* of its existence, has the conscious sense of longing for the nourishment the parent's breast can give ; and a little one, still helpless, feeble, and ignorant, will nevertheless manifest that it lives, and is moved to look for help. It may be so with children of the Lord—there is an infancy—a childhood—belonging to spiritual existence ; and hence we are taught by the Spirit's instruction, not to despise the day of small things—not to be *disquieted* in spirit—to remember that there must be first the blade, then the ear, afterwards the full corn in

the ear: and above all, to rest upon the assurance that *he* is faithful, who, having begun the good work, will perform it till the day of Jesus Christ. When, therefore, the soul is conscious of movements, appetites, sorrows, or joys of a *spiritual* nature, these not being the productions ever seen in unregenerate hearts, destitute of the operation of the Spirit, *hope* should put forth its cheering influence, and this budding promise of a life that God hath engaged to maintain, encourage the soul to seek its nurture where the provision may be found. "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." 1 Peter ii. 1.

These consolations will not generate a state of self-confidence or indolence. We conclude that the breathings after God are unfeigned, and where they are so, we know that they will be increasing. To one who is under this divine operation, comfort and encouragement will be a stimulus to holy exertion in stirring up the spiritual gift that is within. The exhortation speaketh in this manner—"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, *for* it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do," Phil. ii. 12, 13, and when an anxious heart is turning within itself the important

inquiry—what am I? where am I? what is my desire? and what may I hope?—it is enlivening to every humble resolve to be able at least to determine thus much:—I am not what I once was, I desire to be more than what I now am.

Some further view of this doctrine will appear in what remains to be examined on *sanc-tification* ; here, therefore, we will pause, summing up thus much, by observing that according to the word of God the new birth is necessary to salvation ; it is the work of the Holy Ghost ; it is imparted in a principle that is perfect ; it is instantaneously given as a perfect seed, but it gradually developes itself, until attaining its ordained maturity, in the conformity of the whole man to Christ Jesus ; as we read, “having predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren.” Rom. viii. 29.

VII.—SANCTIFICATION.

WE will pass from the doctrine of the new birth into that of *sanctification*;—the *regeneration* of the soul being the seed of a peculiar spiritual existence, answerable to the meaning of this word. But in the first place we must form a right understanding of the different ways in which the word Sanctify is used; for this will enable us to obtain more comprehensive views of the work of the Spirit, in the subjects of Christ's kingdom.

To sanctify, in one essential meaning, is to set apart for holy purposes; accordingly it is said that the Lord did *sanctify* the seventh day. Gen. ii. 3. So of the Jewish tabernacle, that it was *sanctified*, Exodus xxix. 44. And of all vessels or instruments used in the service of the Lord, this act is said to have passed; they were hallowed, or “holy vessels,” being consecrated to religious ends. And to

use them for other purposes was to *profane* the property of the sanctuary of God.

In this sense our Lord speaks of his own consecration to covenant purposes. He was *set apart*, "Behold mine elect in whom my soul delighteth," &c. Isaiah xlii. 1. "For their sakes I *sanctify* myself." John xvii. 19. "The blood of the covenant wherewith *He* was sanctified." Heb. x. 29. Thus our Lord, though in himself holy, and needing no *regeneration*, for he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,"—"the prince of this world having nothing in him," was in the sense of *consecration* to *office*, set apart or *sanctified*, and thus was he, God's "Holy One," and the saint's "Holy One."

The redeemed members of the mystical body are likewise *sanctified*, in this sense of *consecration* from all eternity. As we have before shown, they are *set apart* for holy purposes, according to the words, 1 Peter i. 2, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through *sanctification* of the Spirit *unto* obedience." And the Divine purposes are elsewhere proclaimed as in action to set apart the heirs of glory, the *body* of Christ being thus addressed, "To them that are *sanctified* by God the *Father*, and pre-

served in Christ Jesus, and called," Jude 1. And individuals are described as *sanctified* from the womb; or, as in the case of Jeremiah, "*Before* I formed thee I knew thee, and *before* thou camest forth from the womb I *sanctified* thee." Jeremiah i. 5. Here it is evident that the everlasting *intention* of Jehovah to have a people, and the *determining* purpose of Jehovah in the selection of his people are intended. And to be thus sanctified is the same as the being chosen of God unto salvation. 2 Thess. ii. 13.

But when inquiring more especially into sanctification, as a doctrine that respects the *believer's life*, our view of this Divine purpose becomes more practical, and adapts itself to the condition and experience of *man*, as a creature recovered from rebellious alienation by regeneration, and made possessor of a new principle of holiness, to be developed in a progressing course of active devotion to God. "Ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you:—being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." Rom. vi. 17, 18. And thus again the new life of One who has experienced the Spirit's inward work is stated in

1 Cor. vi. 11, "And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are *sanctified*."

The sanctification of such persons is very comprehensive, it embraces the whole man, and is in the first place of an internal nature. The affections are consecrated, and the heart being yielded to the Lord, becomes his throne whereon he sits, and whereon he rules. It is thus that the bosom of the saint becomes a temple, or hallowed dwelling for the Lord, wherein holy offerings and spiritual sacrifices are perpetually brought before him—a history of experience existing, in that region known only to the believer and his indwelling Lord. The words of the apostle are descriptive of this Christian experience; "*Sanctify* the Lord God in your hearts." The energizing Spirit empowers the believer to yield obedience to the injunction, and the covenant God is *set apart*, hallowed, lodged within, as the treasure, the joy, the life of the soul. The possession thus hallowed is used to sacred ends, and yielding an inexhaustible communication of strength and peace, is a satisfying portion. We may readily conclude that such inward dedication is accompanied with increasing enjoyments; "for the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his

covenant ;” precious hidden pledges of love are interchanged, the voice of the Lord is “Thou shalt be for me, and I will be for thee.” Hosea iii. 3. And the response of the devoted heart is, “Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.” This internal sanctity will invariably follow the work of new creation by the Holy Ghost ; for the purpose of God is to bring back man to his proper happiness, consisting of joy in the Lord. The soul is thus replaced in the original privilege of the creature, “delighting himself in his God.”

The *visible* consecration follows, consisting of two things, viz. *separation* from the ungodly, and *peculiarity* in the *nature* of this separation. The divine requirement is positive in respect of separation from evil. “Come out from among them, touch not the unclean thing ; abstain from the appearance of evil ; have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.” Such preceptive words are not hard to be understood, nor difficult to be obeyed, when the affections are right with God, for *sanctification* is a work pure, impartial, universal in its influence and aim ; the tendency of the new life is all holy, breathing most freely in an atmosphere that is congenial

with its origin, and when out of its true element proportionably depressed. God's child cannot find enjoyment in the society, pursuits, or maxims of men whose whole aim is earthly, and therefore the precept is not only binding upon his conscience, but adapted to his desires and the instinctive movements of his new being, which urge him heavenwards, and bid him rise from sensual delights.

It is very important to understand this aright. To receive the precept merely as a dry and distasteful counsel, as what may be necessary, but never can be agreeable, is to mistake the divine voice, and will be found to render the thought of obedience irksome; but this is not the Lord's method of procedure; when He frames a precept for his child, he combines with the *directive* the *powerful* voice; there is an excellent and wonderful adaptation of the divine requirement to the renewed affections, the one suited to the other, so that a kind of responsive action is perpetually in being, the Lord speaking, and the child hearkening—the Lord asking, and the child giving. *Love* is the constraining grace, and renders his service perfect freedom; for “His commandments are not grievous, but joyous.” In that which calls for separation from the world the

sanctified meet with what perfectly agrees with their taste and appetite; for these are averse to the vain, trifling, injurious habits of the carnally-minded, and desire the substantial and satisfying society of the spiritual; or, indeed, (preferring holy solitude to corrupt communication,) they will, like the dove, delight in the secret shade, and there by the rivers of the pure water of life, commune with the Lord.

But separation from the ungodly is not in *disdain* of these. Oh, no! The regenerate forget not the time when they were children of wrath even as others, fulfilling the desires of the flesh. Eph. ii. 4. Instead of proud self-importance, or an ascetic seclusion, their heart is fraught with humility, and the spirit of laborious charity. *Retirement* is occupied with intercessory prayer, or with zealous designs, which the hours of association, or times of communication with men bring forth. *Sanctification* is a holy existence, comprehending simplicity of devotion to the Lord, and unwearied exertions for men: for it is the opening out of the flower of the seed which has been sown in the heart, advancing the fruit of the Spirit. "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, tem-

perance," exhibiting their healthy and vigorous peculiarity on the richly-laden branch.

We must keep in mind, however, the distinction to be made between regeneration, in the new birth, and the sanctification of the soul, in the *development* of the new life. It is the difference as between the seed-time, and the growing of the *fruit* of the seed; or, as it has been well described, regeneration is grace imparted—conversion, (that is, sanctification,) grace in exercise: and we may add, so in exercise, as that it progresses unto the perfection of the new man. A regenerate soul, by another similitude, is as an infant which has life, but is itself unconscious of the nature of its existence. It is, in its acts, feeble, helpless, ignorant; and in its condition entirely dependent upon the parent for provision and for support. Yet the little child instinctively seeks the source of its supply, and demonstrates its appetite by clinging to the mother's breast. Just so is the new-born soul, many times unable to give an account of its own experience, or to explain its own feelings, frequently also *conscious* of weakness, and *seen* to be ignorant. Spiritual things are *scarcely* discerned, and spiritual requirements only half understood. Yet one born of God can-

not *continue* in infancy! The little child matures and grows to manhood, he attains *his* perfection; so the regenerate grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Not, indeed, ever coming to a state independent of the heavenly Parent's wisdom and strength, but attaining to stability, and growing in sanctified increase of self-knowledge, knowledge of God in covenant, consequent conformity to the Lord's will, and peace through the increase of simplicity, genuine humility, and faith in the Lord.

We do not intend to intimate by these observations, that *sinless perfection* is attained by the saints in this life. The word of God declares, that "there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not;" that the just fall seven times a-day, although seven times a-day rising up again; and that if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. With a spiritual discernment into the nature of sin, and the movements of our own hearts, we shall not maintain such pretensions; for increase of light in the Lord will more powerfully manifest what our old man is, from which, so long as we are in the body, we are not so separated as that it shall trouble us no more. It is still a body of death, grievous to be borne: a law

in our members still working, bringing us into captivity to the law of sin that is in our members; that is, striving, dragging, pulling downwards, and resisting the law in our minds. Of this St. Paul speaks conclusively in the seventh chapter of Romans, and fallacious is the argument that he spake of his state previously to his conversion, since no natural man “delights in the law of God after the inward man,” as he did; neither does an *infant* in *experience* ever *triumph* with such heart-settling and extensive views of the covenant, as those with which he concludes his burst of anguish. As see Rom. vii. 24, 25. viii. 1, 39.

It is, however, certainly true that the Scriptures speak of a perfection belonging to the saints; but it appears by the whole tenor of the Scriptures, which describe the life of faith to signify such a state as admits the supposition, that saints have still to contend with indwelling sin, they advance, they grow to maturity in their new life; yet they reach not such perfection as admits of no censure or blame; they are not *so* complete, as that they can advance to no further measures of sanctity in life and conversation, their perfection therefore is that of a “*man* in Christ Jesus,” that of a “*father*” in the faith, 1 John ii. 13, 14 :

they are *established*, strengthened, settled, a state of soul that is by the apostle styled *perfect*. See 1 Peter v. 10.

The word *perfect* is elsewhere used in the same sense, "Every one that is *perfect* shall be as his Master." Luke vi. 40. "Be ye *perfect*." Matt. v. 48. "The righteousness of the *perfect* shall direct his way." Prov. xi. 5. "We speak wisdom among them that are *perfect*." 1 Cor. ii. 6. "This also we wish, even your *perfection*." 2 Cor. xiii. 9. Examination of these passages with their context, will show that by perfection as thus applied to God's children, the Spirit intends a state *matured*, consisting of enlarged capacities for receiving the knowledge of Christ, and of enlarged abilities to use that knowledge in holiness to the Lord. A person thus perfect will not *commit* sin by a deliberate willing transgression against God's law: he *cannot* sin the sin denounced in the epistle of St. John, that is, as *antichrist*, or as an apostate;—for the seed of God remaineth in him, therefore he cannot fall away.

Sanctification when thus received, is amongst the highest privileges of the faithful; but we must not mistake its nature and end. Let us seek the Spirit's teaching, and strive to possess

power to distinguish one doctrine from another, that we may glorify the Lord in all. In the truth before us we have vast provision for gratitude, and much to awaken us to *dependence*. Every figure through which this work of grace is exhibited, comes replenished with testimony that all our sufficiency is from the Lord. What though the seed be sown, the garden cultivated, and watched : it is God who giveth the increase ! What though the branch be pruned, and the promise of fruit be fair, it is the sap from the parent root that supplies the nurture, and matures the production ; and vain were the hopes of man, had he not a life-giving and life-maintaining Creator to keep his promise of blessing *in season*. How true is this of all spiritual existence ! “ From me is thy fruit found.” Hosea xiv. 8. “ Abide in me, and I in you : as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.” John xv. 4. We, therefore, whilst blessing our God for the operation which we may be able to discover within us, must ask of him grace to be momentarily dependent, and remember the encouraging words, “ He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.”

VIII.—JUSTIFICATION.

It is most suitable that the subject following our last, should be that of *justification*. By connecting our view of the new birth and its results in sanctification, with the doctrine of grace by which we possess a *title* to the everlasting inheritance on high, we shall not only have the method of the covenant of life in Jesus brought in simplicity before us, but be assisted in looking into the distinction between that operation by which we are made *meet* for glory, and that title by which we have *right* to the kingdom. Justification is a term by which we describe the case of one who, being accused, is found upon examination of his case to be clear of the charge brought against him. It supposes that so far from being found guilty and reprovable; he is pronounced to be unoffending and approved. When used in reference to the privileged believer, it de-

scribes that gracious act whereby he is in this sense accepted before God, his accusers being confounded and silenced, his claim upon the promised inheritance substantiated and acknowledged. It differs from *pardon*, which supposes guilt to be found, and places the pardoned in circumstances of disgrace, as having committed transgression. Forgiveness of sin may secure the sinner from punishment, but cannot render him deserving of reward. It may free him from apprehension of going down to the pit, but it will not assure him of rising to glory in heaven. A man who is indebted for his safety to that which cancels his debt, cannot be said to have paid the uttermost farthing; he has liberty, by the lenient disposition of his creditor, not by any right irrespective of that grace. These are not the terms on which the redeemed of the Lord enter their reserved rest, as more fully defined elsewhere; were it possible to separate forgiveness and justification in the Divine covenant, we might find a soul with its transgression washed away in the blood of the Lamb, and yet left unclothed with the garment that must render him an accepted guest at the marriage supper of Christ.

The original conditions on which the reward

was made dependant, are every where proclaimed in the scriptures. "*Do* this and live." "The *doers* of the law are justified," Rom. ii. 13. Man was created a responsible creature, under obligation to yield the obedience of perfect love to his maker, and his disposition to obey was addressed through the prohibiting command in Eden ;—"Of the tree of knowledge thou shalt not eat." Supreme love to his God was to be the governing principle by which it should be his joy habitually and constantly to please his Lord. The alteration made in man's nature and condition has not procured any change in the mind of God. Jehovah is of one mind—he changeth not—his counsels also are in wisdom, needing no amendment, and admitting of no decrease or addition. Laws instituted by such a lawgiver, must partake of his character, and we never discover throughout the word of revelation the slightest intimation of a different standard proposed to man, or of an *accommodation* of the divine law to the circumstances of the fallen creature. It invariably pronounces death upon the transgressor, it continues to shew us, that he "who is guilty of one is guilty of all," that all who are under the law are under the curse, for it is written, "Cursed

is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." By the same revelation it appears that the demand of God upon the *entire* affection remains. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and mind, and soul, and strength." *This* is a command, it calls for perfect obedience, and makes no provision for safety in case of default. He therefore who would be *justified* before God, must produce the required condition, otherwise he can be but a *pardoned criminal*, not a *righteous* man. How hopeless is the prospect before man when thus contemplated ! Surely, if such be the irrevocable condition on which his entrance into heaven depends, he must acknowledge that the gate of glory can never be lifted up to him. "What is the righteousness of a fallen man, wherewith to cover him ? the covering is narrower than that he can wrap himself in it." Isaiah xxviii. 20. His attempts after justifying obedience are feeble, frail, and ignorant—his acquirements are tattered, stained, and defective, and he realizes the declared fact, that by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified in God's sight. What is the sanctity of the saint ? *sincere* and unfeigned it is true—but short of

the broad commandment: it doth not reach to the perfection of the divine law: it doth not present unblemished beauty—and were it possible that sanctification should be so unblemished as that from the time of regeneration to that of the dissolution of the union of soul and body, no fault could be attached to the obedience; *obedience* so performed could not atone for *previous fault*, nor compensate for the life of rebellion in which the sinner had trodden. “But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident.” Gal. iii. 11. And wherefore? even because no man hath kept the law, and “the scripture hath concluded all under sin.” Gal. iii. 22.

What then is the hope which gilds the prospect, and delivers the soul from fear? and by what singular means is it that God can be just, and the justifier of the believer? Marvellous is the reply! Even by *magnifying* the law, and making it *honorable*. The righteous God is infinite “in wisdom and prudence”—and hath abounded in these by providing One who, as a substitute, endured the curse of the broken law, and as a representative, accomplished all its requisites. He who died upon the cross, received the weight of our iniquity laid upon him: and He who

made himself under the law, received our responsibility into himself; hence, in character of a surety, working out a righteousness without defect—without stain;—he earned for the souls destitute of right to an inheritance, the lawful right: whilst the believer receiveth the kingdom as a gift by grace to him, the kingdom was nevertheless given to *Christ* their head, as a *reward*, in virtue of the fulfilment of the stipulated terms. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” “He was made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.” “He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” “By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” Thus the doctrine of justification is unfolded as one of righteousness and strictest justice; as bestowed, not by a change of the standard, not by dishonour to the law, (which is holy, just, and good,) not by “clearing the guilty,” not by compromising matters, but by providing a righteousness wrought out by him who assumed the responsible nature, and by whose Divine nature the accomplished work obtaineth infinite value

for imputation to his redeemed. Contemplating this privilege, the inspired apostle breaks forth with a challenge upon every accuser, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died: yea, rather that is risen again." With experimental *affection* also we hear him declare that those things which were gain to him, he counted loss for Christ; and that his earnest desire was to apprehend the fulness of his privilege in the justifying righteousness of his Lord, "and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Phil. iii. 7—9. This privilege, of which the apostle makes his holy boast, is common to the whole family of God. "All that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law." Acts xiii. 39. Without a part in this privilege, none can be saved, "The wages of sin is death; the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord;" and thus through him, (as it is expressed in Titus iii. 7.) "being *justified* by his grace, we are made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." "That as sin hath reigned unto

death, even so might grace reign *through righteousness* unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. v. 21.

How glorious is this doctrine in its tribute to our Head! what honour thus crowns our great High Priest! what blessedness also doth it proclaim to such as are in him—"who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." With never-failing grace he *imparts* the *sanc-tity* through vital union with himself; and with infinitely abounding love he *imputes* the *righteousness*; thus clothing his bride in her royal attire, and constituting her, whilst all glorious *within*, splendid in her golden robe. Psalm xlv.

The glory of this doctrine, like all other covenant purposes towards the people of God, must be traced up to the everlasting will of Jehovah. He, by whom is the whole arrangement of this salvation to be effected by Christ, not only ordaineth the vessels of mercy to their final inheritance in Christ, but has determined all the links of the great chain of divine power which brings them there. Therefore we conclude that *justification* is kept by the Lord for his children from all eternity, as belonging to the everlasting design of grace towards

them. But we are not on this account to state the doctrine as *applied* to the elect previously to the Spirit's work in the heart. Ere the Holy Ghost worketh faith within us, we "*are all the children of wrath* even as others;" and are not to be considered as either in a *state* of pardon, or in a *state* of justification. Whilst estranged from God we are in the *paths* of destruction, and whilst covered with the filth of sin we are obnoxious to punishment. The Holy Spirit has therefore expressly shewn that *it is through* faith, which lays hold upon the provision, that the privilege of justification is apprehended, and that it is when the Holy Ghost engrafteth us into Jesus that the eternal purpose is applied. The regular succession of privileges is thus stated in Rom. viii. 28—30, "to them that are called according to his purpose, for whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified." This agrees with the general voice of revelation, by which we discover that the everlasting purposes of God are *holy*, not

only in the issue but in the way that leads to their accomplishment. And that although the church of Christ is accepted in the beloved, she in all her members is introduced into the *possession* of the blessing by the Spirit's operation in holiness.

There is an interesting particular wherein justification must be distinguished from the work of grace by which it is apprehended. *Sanctification*, though complete in the principle from which it proceeds, is *incomplete* in its manifestation until furthered by increasing influences of the Spirit. And as we have observed before, as a seed *it groweth*. Not so is *justification*,—this is complete at once, not admitting of *increase* or *decrease*; and whether the act of faith be in measure great or small, makes no difference as to the justification it apprehends. A man is not justified according to the *degree* of his faith, but by the perfection of the merit which his faith apprehends. That merit, being the righteousness of Christ, is always the same; hence in the *title* to heaven, the whole family are placed exactly in the same condition, being in every member clothed with the wedding garment and *justified* by one complete and imputed *righteousness*. The difference that will un-

questionably attend the final condition of the glorified, consists not in their *claim*, but in their *capacity*. The vessels of mercy will all be replenished with fulness; but they will not all be replenished with equal quantity. Some are capable of higher enjoyment in Christ than others even here below, and amongst saints in the militant church, there is in this respect, much variety; and so, no doubt, it will be hereafter, when receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls, we shall receive likewise such a *measure* of blessedness as accords with our individual capacity. There will be no *lack* to any, and nothing *over*! but as in the history of Israel it will be that every one will gather according to appetite. Thus the Lord has wisely and wonderfully consulted for preserving the glory of all to Christ, whilst at the same time believers as intelligent and rational and responsible creatures, are taught to aspire after *higher* possessions, and are animated in seeking increased *meetness* for their final home.

O that this all-important doctrine were better and more generally understood, and more simply apprehended to individual consolation. Alas! the self-righteous leaven worketh in opposition to the truth, and to the destruction

or discomfort of souls, and notwithstanding the excellent glory which is, through this appointment, put upon the Divine Nature, Law and Covenant, they turn away their eyes from the object, consider it either derogatory to the honour of God, or dangerous to the souls of men; and being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." Rom. x. 4. *Believers*, even, are sometimes found thus in fault, adhering to some fancied goodness to which they expect to attain, and by which they seem to imagine they may recommend themselves to Divine favour, not properly distinguishing between the inwrought graces which adorn the regenerate and which, as the fruit of the Spirit, are approved by their Author, and the procuring cause of acceptance with God, which is only to be found in the Lord Jesus Christ. Too many *children* of God are thus held in bondage by subtle imaginations and the workings of the leaven of the Pharisees. And hence so many, instead of rejoicing in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, walk under clouds, and live in restless solicitude of spirit. There can be no full and *stable confidence* until this great doctrine be

accepted, and its privilege appropriated ; but when the soul, going out of its own refuges, by faith lays hold upon this covenant provision, Christ's bequeathed peace is realized, for "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. v. 1. Let us earnestly pray for the Spirit's illumination in our subject. It is his office to testify of Jesus, and by him we shall be taught how "this is His name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our Righteousness," and so we shall enter into the blessedness described in Rom. iv 4—6.

IX.—FORGIVENESS OF SIN THROUGH THE ATONEMENT.

THE privilege and blessing of *pardon* will be the subject of consideration in this chapter. It stands in connection with the great and gracious provisions of the covenant through which our thoughts have been conducted ; and in proportion to the sense of our individual provocation against God will be our appreciation of this most inestimable benefit, and our holy solicitude to be rightly informed.

We shall best understand this act of grace by looking to the circumstances of our *fallen nature* ; the carnal mind is in all instances *in-subordinate* ; “ It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Rom. viii. 7. As soon as we are born we go astray, giving universal proof that the Psalmist’s confession is just in all, “ I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.” Psalm li.

5. Sealing confirmation of this fact is continually before us in the execution of the sentence annexed to transgression, which, not only as soon as we are born, but even previously to birth, is inflicted, "for as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom. v. 12. "The wages of sin is death," and if the sentence be assigned to one who by *actual* transgression has not, as it were, earned the awful payment, it becomes an undoubted fact that there is in our *nature* that transgressing character which has procured the curse: and in the infliction of this denunciation on infants we see established before us the certainty that death is the expression of God's displeasure against our *nature* as alienated and rebellious.

But we who live to develop the several corrupt dispositions of our fallen nature, have fearful cause to confess our provocation, "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Rom. iii. 23. Our course has been one of actual transgression and consequently of *sin*, for "sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John iii. 4. And as the consequence is inseparable from such a career, we inherit the awful results.

These are, first, *separation from God*. "He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity." No complacent regard, or condescending nearness of fellowship can be expressed from the Righteous One towards creatures unholy and unclean: "he beholdeth them afar off." "Your iniquities have *separated* between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you." Isaiah lix. 2. A separation thus procured through the fall cannot but be increased in its dismal darkness to the actual sinner; and since his iniquities are the obscuring cloud, his daily and hourly trespasses thicken this veil, and he walketh in darkness.

Secondly, such are placed *under condemnation*, the cloud is big with judgment and impregnated with fiery indignation. The way of the transgressor is a perpetual challenge of the Almighty, moving the Divine perfection to vengeance; and whosoever he may be who transgresses, he, by his trespass merits destruction, and, as a sinner, is a child of wrath. Ephes. ii. 4.

Thirdly, in all instances the provocation is attended with the *expression* of Divine displeasure;—"thou hast sinned, and be sure thy sin will find thee out:" in every *un-pardoned case* the expression will be abiding wrath, John

iii. 36. And in every *pardoned* one the token will be *correction* by the rod.

That such fearful evils can never be removed, but by an act of forgiving mercy from God, we readily understand, and usually, freely acknowledge. And blessed be the Lord, the needed mercy is freely given, according to the revelation which shews us a God *ready* to forgive, "keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin." Exodus xxxiv. 6. "To the Lord our God *belong* mercies and forgivenesses!" Dan. ix. 9. It is however highly important that the *method* of grace be kept in view, and that whilst we rejoice in the promise of forgiveness, we see the way whereby the mercy is obtained to the guilty. The children of God are a *redeemed* people, they are recovered to God, and held back from perdition by the grace of atonement that is wrought in and by Christ. And no act of forgiveness could be extended to the sinner, were not this redemption work established. The Lord hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence, as is affirmed in Ephesians i. 7, 8. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace, wherein he

hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence;" *wisdom* in the excellence of the plan of salvation—*prudence* in the sanctity of that plan. The freeness of divine love is unquestionable, and its unchangeable holiness is equally so, and although we delight to magnify the Father's boundless and ready compassion; we forget not the sacred necessity existing that these compassions should flow through a channel of righteousness. That channel is prepared in the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by whom, as an Incarnate Deliverer, *Atonement* for sin has been made, and the law-sentence of death, been established. Our eyes are directed to him as a sin-bearing Surety, on whom iniquity was laid, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." It was beneath this burden that Jesus suffered, groaned, and died, enduring in body and soul the penalty due to man. In *body*, bleeding beneath the blow provoked by sin imputed to him; in *soul*, receiving the pains of hell to which such as are finally doomed to its outer darkness are reserved. The exhibition of Jesus on the cross, proclaims these heart-affecting truths, as expository of the prophetic page, and as confirmatory of the word, "he will by no means *clear* the guilty." Guilt never loses its heinous nature;

When resting upon the transgressor, it sinks him to eternal condemnation in the region of the blackness of darkness—when imputed to Jesus, it agonized him as the man of sorrows—as the consumed victim—as the bloody sacrifice: “surely he hath borne our griefs.” “It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin.” Isa. liii. 10. We have no expression of the Father’s love equal to that which is beheld on Calvary. We are not to suppose that the mysterious agonies endured by Christ as our Surety, were procured through the reluctance of the Divine Nature to be merciful, but rather that these are the *demonstrations* of love—of love and mercy which none but God can possess—infinite—unsearchable! Our Lord saith, “I say not, I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himself loveth you.” The *love of the Father* is expressed in various parts of the redemption, and as altogether *boundless* and *free*, providing us all spiritual blessings—bestowing upon us the spirit of adoption, and contemplating us with parental tenderness. This love devised the way whereby we might in justice be restored to his paternal bosom; nor did it hesitate in its accomplishment, although no less a

price could be available than the substitution of that eternal One who came to receive the drops of the night into his most holy soul. Thus "God hath commended his love to us," by sending his Son: "God *so* loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16. According to what we have seen in the doctrine of Justification, Christ is to be received as the Representative Head of his people; for them he wrought out a *righteousness* answerable to that part of the law which saith, "*Do this and live.*" And for them he endured the wrath answerable to the sentence "the soul that sinneth shall die." Thus holy requirements and irreversible denunciations uttered by him whose voice changeth not, are all answered, and the way thrown wide open whereby the redeemed may in security pass by the gates of hell, and through those of glory. The *obedience* of Christ was complete, and offered in *human* nature. The *sufferings* of Christ were entire, and endured in *human* nature. The human nature assumed was suited to and capable of meeting the requirement belonging properly to man. His was a body and soul meet for God, being after the image

of God, after the likeness wherein man was originally created. So that although in his deep *voluntary humiliation* the Saviour took our nature as nature stripped of visible dignity, and reduced to *suffering* dependance,—Satan had nothing in him. “He was holy, undefiled, and separate from sinners;” God’s *Holy One*! Hence flowed the “sweet savour” of his offering, when for our sakes he laid down his life. “For their sakes I sanctify myself.” “I lay down my life for the sheep; I lay it down of myself; no man taketh it from me; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” It is in this relation that when our Lord bowed his head in death, he exclaimed, “It is finished!” The propitiation was complete. “He died unto sin *once*,” in that act acknowledging the *desert* of sin. But he could not be *holden* of death; death had no *dominion* over him. And having discharged the debt contracted by his people, he burst from the prison of the grave a *justified man*! “Declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead.” Rom. i. 4. Thus Daniel’s prophetic testimony was fulfilled, “Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself;” but, as in verse 24, “to finish the transgression and to make an end

of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy." Dan. ix. "*Without* this shedding of blood, there is no remission:" Heb. ix. 22. *By* it, remission is full and complete. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." 1 John i. 7.

The doctrine that is thus unfolded to our eyes comes richly impregnated with consolation to every sin-burdened conscience. Such sinners are taught to rest beneath the cross, hearkening with confidence to the *covenant* language spoken in every wound, in every groan, in every triumph of the mysterious sacrifice. "I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." "Look unto me and be ye saved." "He gave his life a ransom for many." Scriptures such as these encourage the transgressor to hope for and believe the promise whereby he may individually receive forgiveness. The *grace* is free, the *virtue* of the procuring cause of forgiveness, which is the blood of Christ, is without limit, Matt. xii. 31. Sinners of the *most enormous* degree have proved the efficacy

of the provision and the truth of the promise. Mary wept not in vain, when she stood behind Jesus, and let fall her tears upon his feet: the dying thief was not rejected, when in the bitterness of death he turned a believing eye on his redeeming Saviour. The jailor was heard when exclaiming, "what must I do to be saved," and myriads now crowding around the throne of the Lamb on High, sing their never-ceasing acclamations;—" *He hath redeemed us unto God by his blood.*" It is not, then, the greatness or the multitude of the sins that will prevent the extension of forgiveness to the guilty. The fountain is opened, wherein the soul that plunges into its all-availing flood, will find every iniquity lost to sight, washed clean away. This was the confidence of faith expressed by David—"Wash me, and I shall be clean." The confidence is rightly placed, for there is a promise by which it is justified,—
"Come, let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isa. i. 18.

Forgiveness of this description is such as a sinner *requires*, and such as the truly convinced long after. It is free, it is full, it is irrevocable: it procureth the removal of the

several evils consequent upon transgression. The cloud of *separating darkness* is dispersed, "I have blotted out thy transgressions like a thick cloud, and will not remember thy sins:" "they shall not be mentioned to thee any more." Isaiah xliii. 25. Ezekiel xviii. 22. Heb. viii. 12. The *condemnation* is removed, "there is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," Rom. viii. 7. What then shall we say of those expressions of displeasure which yet are sometimes required by transgression in his people,—are these removed also? We answer with praise to our reconciled Father—O no! not the wise infliction of a chastening rod. But yes, verily, assuredly, as to any expression of *destroying* rebuke; "I will visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes, nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from them, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail."—Psalm lxxxix. 32, 33.

The *application* of the benefit is made when we believe—herein we must keep our understanding clear. That the *object* of the divine love, as a vessel of mercy, must be made a partaker of *all* covenant blessings, must necessarily follow the purpose of God as established *in election in Christ*, and consequently, along

with others, the blessing of *forgiveness* is *reserved* for them? and, together with justification, must be their's as the *Elect of God*.

It is the office of Christ to "*give* repentance and remission of sins," Acts v. 31. this repentance is wrought "*through* faith, and *that* not of ourselves, *it* is the gift of God." Ephes. ii. By this faith we trust in him whom we have pierced, with penitential mournings; we proceed to a further act of faith, we look, and long, and *believe*; the provision is accepted, it is welcomed as the place of refuge, and the soul is now secure from fear of the storm. We are delivered from an *evil*, that is, an *accusing* conscience, by that *sprinkling* of the blood which giveth peace. But however full and sure the blessing in the divine *intention*, its efficacious virtue is not *proved* before the droppings light upon the sorrowing heart. It is by being brought, and coming, to the sacrifice, through the operation of the Holy Ghost, that sinners experience this sense of pardon, and have their score of debt expunged. Until this be effected, their hideous stains *appear*, and their guilt is offensive before God; but sins *forgiven*, are to be considered as sins buried or cast into the depths of *the sea*, Mic. vii. 19, never to rise

up again. To the meditative mind of the believer, indeed, they oftentimes present themselves as in a fearful resurrection, tending increasingly to abase him in his own eyes, and reminding him of what the Lord has wrought in his *pardoned* condition ; but they are not *again accusers* before the throne, these have been answered, and silenced by the atonement. Yet pardons are still requisite, the believer falleth seven times a-day ; the saint exclaims, “if thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity—O Lord, who shall stand.” The daily course of the Christian is through a defiling world, and with his rebellious old nature still distressing him ; hence he is conscious of contracting defilement, to which he himself contributes by his own disease : the atoning blood is required in repeated *acts* of covenant truth, adapted to the acts of evil to be bewailed ; and accordingly it is to the blood of *sprinkling* that we are come, evermore putting forth new energies of faith for renewed expressions of forgiving love. Just as in the relation between parent and child, the relation subsists, and cannot be destroyed ; yet the cloud of displeasure may veil the parent’s smile, and the cloud dispersed may nevertheless again recur, *and again* require to be dispersed. Just thus

is it with God's pardoned children, and just thus they are privileged to believe in the sure and irreversible remission of sins, whilst they, with child-like solicitude, ask for the blessing on every recurring fault.

What now is the use that we who read these great revelations should make of the subject before us? Our understanding should take up the words of Scripture, and say, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered—blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." Psalm xxxii. 1, 2.

Our *heart* should echo the strain in a deep consciousness of personal misery and need of forgiveness. We ought not to shrink from a sense of our own sin. Not he who approveth himself is justified in God's sight, but he whom the Lord approveth. It is infatuation and folly to pretend we have no sin; it is delusion and destruction to measure ourselves by our own imagination and rules of action. Our certain prospect is the judgment-seat of one who will search and try and weigh every secret of the heart, and in whose judgment even "the thought of foolishness is sin." We should likewise understand that sins *endured* by the forbearance of God, are not assuredly

sins *forgiven* by his love. *Longsuffering* is not synonymous with *pardon*, and many a miserable offender, from whose treacherous memory committed iniquity has been effaced, will find an awful account opened out to his recollection when the Judge appeareth. How fearful will be the condemnation, when all! all! shall be brought home upon the ruined soul! And oh, *then*, how blessed will that provision appear, by which the curse is done away! These are the thoughts that should be entertained by us now, in order to awaken the heart from its slumberings; by which not only are sinners addressed with *rousing* considerations to their *unalarmed* souls, but believers also are reached, as through a medium whereby their redeeming Lord would convey increased sense of their debt of love. The response from these should be, "O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me." Such privileged believers should likewise be constantly exercised in looking unto Jesus, and in realizing this great doctrine, that God is "*faithful* and *just* to forgive us our sins,"—*faithful* to his covenant oath to and in Jesus—*just* in not demanding second payment of a *debt fully discharged*, as satisfactorily an-

swered in the person of the believer's surety. This view affords strong consolation, and puts into the pleadings and praises of the church the ability to ask for blessing by *the righteousness* of the Divine name. Wonderful argument! wonderful atonement! that can provide argument such as this for creatures circumstanced as we are! And let it not be objected that doctrines such as these are *dangerous*: they will not be so to one in whom is the anointing—there is a remarkable passage in Ezek. xvi. 62, 63: “And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord. That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.” This describes *the effect* of redeeming love apprehended by the house of Israel. It is humility—self-abasement—very far from *presumption*. The same is declared in Psalm cxxx. 4. “There is forgiveness with thee, that thou *mayest be feared*.” Various and sacred are the motives which preserve the child of God from an abuse of his privilege. These we may hereafter examine—let it suffice us at present to be told, that the pardoned wanderer leaves his

Father's house no more, nor ever would willingly wound the honor of that Lord on whose breast of mercy he is privileged to lean. 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11.

X.—ADOPTION.

IT is the peculiar privilege of the Lord's people to be admitted into a relation with their God with which none other are acquainted—they are in an especial sense the *children of God*. The new-creating Spirit gives them that second birth of which Jehovah alone is the author; and as partakers of this grace they are the “sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty.” The act of grace is styled *adoption*, and the disposition which accompanies it, accords with the term. There is a mutual understanding between the parent and the child, and an interchange of affection, by which the favoured offspring is assured of protection and peace. The privilege is placed with other covenant designs, as we read in Ephes. i. 5, 6. “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his

grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."

It is scarcely needful to give an explanation of the term *adoption*, yet it so aptly delineates the subject before us, that the consideration may provide us with heads from which to derive spiritual instruction or confirmation; therefore we will call to mind the nature of this act in respect of the relation subsisting amongst men. Adoption is an act whereby one who has no rightful claim, by ties of blood, is received into the adopter's family and bosom as a child, and as practised amongst nations of old was legally established by various accompanying forms and regulations, through which the end designed by the contracting parties might be secured. It was necessary in the first place, to clear the way for the arrangement by obtaining the consent of such as had previous right to the child, that all existing claims and rights should be considered annulled. The child too, if of sufficient age to make choice of the proposal, must signify his readiness to relinquish every other relation, and to be subject to his adopter in the spirit of obedience and gratitude: he must forsake his own father's house; he must *assume* the name of his adopter; and must

deport himself on all occasions as one firmly and affectionately united with all the interests of the family into which he was received. The adopter on his part must fulfil all the relation of a father, providing for the support, education, and comfort of the chosen object, and bequeathing to him that inheritance which the terms of the adoption might specify. In order to secure that no after circumstances should invalidate the claims of the adopted, this transaction was of a public nature, before chosen witnesses, entered in the public registers, and a copy of the register delivered into the hands of the child, to which he was privileged to appeal for a witness to his claim, and which was to be considered as conclusive evidence.

The spiritually-minded will be able to realize the Christian privilege hid beneath this veil; but, blessed be the Lord, the veil is drawn aside by the gospel, so as to reveal the glorious distinction and the grace by which it is bestowed; and the voice of the Spirit would awaken every member of the dignified family to exclaim with the Apostle, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called sons of God." 1 John iii. 1. Our claim to such a distinction

can never be substantiated but by turning to the grace of God's free and unmerited purpose, breaking forth from his own bountiful design to bless us with whatever might tend to our riches in glory; how otherwise could we, reduced, rebellious, estranged sinners, hope for the liberty of such a father's house! How look for the privilege of saying unto him, "Abba, Father;" or how experience the affection of filial peace! The selection of the objects of his favour must be free, as is implied in the human transaction by which it is represented, and the moving cause must ever stand higher in its grace, seeing that neither beauty, nor worth, nor any recommendatory qualities could be discovered in a nature vile as our's. Oh, no! The cause for such an act can only appear in the resolve of Jehovah to glorify himself in the riches of his grace! It is the *alien* that is chosen; it is the stranger that is brought home; it is the poor, the bankrupt, laden with debts, and pressed down by unanswerable obligations, that being the object of divine love, is liberated from every yoke, from every obstructing bond, and made a favoured child! The *redemption* sets him *free*, and the *regeneration* fetches him home; the voice of *rejoicing mercy* gathers round him; "this my son

was dead and is alive ; ” and the witnessing members of the holy family rejoice together over him whom they now greet with the appellation of “ *brother !* ”

Persons thus distinguished are brought into all the privileges which God, as a covenant Father, will bestow, they cannot be introduced to such a home without being made also partakers of its fulness. The habitation where God dwelleth must needs be replenished out of his riches ; and hence the church proclaims her contentment, “ he brought me into his banqueting house, and his banner over me is love.” The repast is such as suits the appetite of the new creature ; it is composed of the “ wines on the lees well refined,” the milk and honey, and bread prepared in the work of salvation, and of all the promises and pledges whereby the blood-bought children are assured of life. The voice of invitation and encouragement rises high in its tone ; “ Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.” And the holy freedom is complete when Jesus, fulfilling his word, enters the consecrated home as saying, “ I will come in and sup with him, and he with me.”

“ By the divine *covenant* Jehovah must accomplish his part of the relation ; “ like as a

father pitying his own children ;” as a parent making ample provision for their support and comfort—furthering their education for the final inheritance, and extending to them every needed supply. The privileges, therefore, which belong to the adoption, are according to the wisdom and truth of God, and are treasured up for the sure experience of the adopted soul. But meagre indeed seems an attempt at description, when mercies that are the portion of one made “joint heir” with Christ are to be proclaimed. It should, however, be understood that the table of the Lord is spread with no doubtful and no scanty provision, and that the dispensations of the Lord towards every child are liberal, prudent, and loving. There is no doctrine wherein the unchanging love of God is more gratefully to be apprehended than in this of adoption. To be once constituted a child is to be everlastingly such. An adoption framed in the person and work of Emmanuel must have an abiding character, and as nothing in this world, except the mutual consent of each party, can dissolve the relation subsisting between the adopter and the object of adoption, so nothing in this world, nor in the world to come, can ever destroy the bond formed by the Spirit betwixt God’s

adopted children and himself. Rom. viii. 38, 39. The privilege is thus expressed in Gal. iv. 7, "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son, and if a *son*, then an *heir* of God through Christ."

In *token* of this relation the Spirit of adoption is given into the heart, as it is written, "ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." Rom. viii. 15—17. Hereby the responding affections of a child are created, and uttered, and every obligation which this blissful relation can inspire is received heartily and affectionately. The loving requirement to draw near and partake of the benefit falls upon a heart that longs for *communion*; the obedience of faith ensues, and, impelled by the spirit of adoption, the child approaches;—it is true, indeed, that there are occasions when the approach is unattended with any audible expression, but the heart speaketh, and our Father receives and hears what is spoken there. The breathing or panting of desires for God will be accepted. The half-

uttered request,—the broken sigh,—the deeper groan, are all the fruit of the adoption, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, “but the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered; and he who searcheth the heart knoweth the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” Such approaches are child-like, and accepted. There are also acts of obedience attended with higher experience, when with a glow of holy delight the bosom swells with risings of affection, and devotion is breathed from the lips, it may be to express the fervor of love—or of hope and expectation—or of pleading and repose; this will be according to the particular circumstances of God’s child, but in every case it will be in the spirit of adoption,—with confidence in the power and will of the Father. There is another frame of soul known likewise by these, wherein the disposition of a reconciled heart is evinced, when, according to experience, the sense of adoption lies low; there is a stillness in the inward region, little *movement* in the affections—little inclination to take *words* before the Lord, and yet a calm, a confident repose *in the righteousness and goodness of the Lord*

prevailing ; this disposition is one of acquiescence, resignation, and trust, and sometimes is accompanied by marked features of zeal for the divine honor. These are dispositions belonging to adoption, and are not in exercise, save where the spirit of a child is shed abroad by the Holy Ghost.

But prayerfulness is not the only fruit of adoption ; every soul in this relation will be possessed of a principle of obedience to the divine command. “ If, saith the Lord, I am a Father, where is mine honour.” The true disposition is reverential ; — “ let us have grace wherewith to serve our God with reverence and godly fear.” It is not of the Spirit to generate a bold familiarity with Him before whom the highest angels lie prostrate in adoring wonder. In proportion as our eyes are opened, to behold the glory of the Lord of Hosts, we shall be impressed with his Majesty, and bow before his light ! and although bondage is removed, and love implanted, we do not treat our Father with disrespect, nor consider ourselves at liberty to trifle with his command. Genuine filial love will beget fervent appeals to be taught the holy precept ; and when the precept is delivered, it will produce a ready compliance with the Divine Will.

It is thus that the children of God speak out their filial zeal:—"shew me thy path,"—"lead me in thy ways,"—"what wilt thou have me to do:" and it is thus that we shall manifest like upright features with other children of the family; for we likewise, as sons and daughters of our covenant parent, delight in his law, and lovingly seek to be obedient. "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments: for this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous; for whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." 1 John v. 2—4. And again, "He that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us," 1 John iii. 24. We are often heard to speak of the blessing of a state of assurance: this blessing is intimately connected with that of adoption, as the figure shews; for as the adopted child received a copy of his lawful right as registered in the public courts, so doth God's child in the indwelling witness of the Holy Ghost. "He that believeth hath the witness in himself." Many are the adversaries who would seek to invalidate our claim

to the inheritance in Christ, and many who boldly dispute our title. The great enemy from the bottomless pit is in this sense an accuser, and would argue our souls out of hope, and our characters out of credit; we ourselves likewise do sometimes feel staggered by the force of the argument, and by conscious default in the dispositions of a child. Wherefore it is incumbent upon us, if we will preserve our own evidence unquestionable, to be looking to the inward witness, consisting of the seal of the adoption, in the Holy Ghost's transforming and assuring grace. For although there be immediate actings of the Comforter in the soul, wherein, irrespective of our acts of self-scrutiny, He is pleased to give forth precious assurance of God's love—and although our adoption be placed amidst the covenant gifts, without works or merit in us, our Holy Lord will not acknowledge us as his children, *approved* and *justified*, whilst we are leading a prodigal life. Neither shall we, even after our recovery to God, possess or exhibit *unquestionable* evidences, without having within us the mind and spirit of the Lord. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God," Rom. viii. 14; "and every man that hath this hope in him purifieth

himself, even as he is pure," 1 John iii. 3. "If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him," 1 John ii. 29. It is clear to every ingenuous mind that this order of things is holy and right; and if our mind is so constructed, we shall yield to the tide of evidence given us in the Scripture, and be convinced that no man shall see or enter the kingdom of God unless he be born of God—that the child of God is born of God—that none are so distinguished but as they are visited by the free Spirit given to them in Christ Jesus, that they become children of God by an adoption undeserved by them, that God as a covenant parent is engaged to extend every thing needful to his child for time and eternity, and that the child is placed under the authority of his Father, bound by every solemn and every grateful motive to yield his parent joy and honour, and an obedience that is unlimited, zealous, and free. Placing these several considerations in a parallel line with the relations subsisting *amongst men*, we immediately feel and admit their force—how much more forcible is the statement when made to bear upon the spiritual relation subsisting in God's chosen *family*. And if this be admitted, how undeniably are we brought to the conclusion that it

is high time for us to be looking to what may be our relation and our prospect in eternal things. If discovering that we are as yet evidently estranged, we should consider to what a fearful issue our way is tending,—if finding that we are in a state of reconciliation, we should accept the joy it presents in the heritage on which we have entered, and to which we are fast hastening. Children of God should likewise receive their present lot with the *filial disposition* of children. Whatever it be, it is our Father's appointment, and must be wise and good ; His *correction* also should be the subject of humble, and it may be, of penitential thanksgiving, seeing that these proclaim a parent's zeal for our best interests, and will yield abundant fruit to his glory and our holiness, even as we read Heb. xii. 5—11.

May the Lord the Spirit impart to us at this time, grace to exercise this spirit of adoption in a believing and fervent prayer, that whatever belongeth to the lot of God's children may fall to us ; and that having in his strength obtained the final victory, we may from his hand receive the never-fading crown. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things ; and I will be his God, and he shall be my Son," *Rev. xxi. 7.*

XI.—CALLING, OR VOCATION.

THE state of liberty and elevation described by the doctrine of adoption, has afforded us a cheering view of Christian privilege, and taken in connexion with all the preceding statements on which we have exercised our minds, brings up the glorious revelation to the highest practical results. But we have yet to inquire into the remaining scenes, lying beyond the present state of things, wherein the attainment of the believer's inheritance will exhibit a yet more enrapturing view of the salvation of the church in Christ Jesus, and of the glory which in her perfection the Saviour himself will inherit.

Before passing to a view of this period, we will however answer an inquiry which is properly placed in this stage of our volume, it is this—How and by what means is it that persons, in their original condition fallen, alienated, and at enmity against God, come into

the possession of the great distinction described? And what are we to understand of a *speciality* in the general invitation to sinners with which the scriptures abound? There is a question of similar import in the scriptures themselves, "But I said, how shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations?" The reply is provided in the same scripture, "Thou shalt call me, my Father; and shalt not turn away from me." Jer. iii. 19. It is thus that every individual of the family of God's house is placed in his high habitation, and thus alone that any man receives the spirit of adoption, whereby to cry, "Abba, Father."

The *call* is given, *couched* in general terms. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price." "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die." "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy-laden." "Come out, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." These are words of general im-

port, and are delivered as the proclamation of terms of peace in a rebel's country, promising an amnesty on condition of their arms being laid down, in submission. Such proclamations are calls from the Divine Majesty, and are varied in merciful liberality according to man's character and condition. He is addressed with every consideration, which, to a rational creature should appear unanswerable, and is urged by every motive which the experience of an observant mind should enforce. The Lord has been pleased also to continue his method of mercy from generation to generation, adding to each succeeding race of men the example of their fathers, whether in the ruin consequent upon continued revolt, or in the blessedness of the exchange made by acceptance of peace.

Along with these measures there have been tokens, dispensations, and convictions from time to time, of mercy and judgment wrought towards, and within, individual transgressors, and all well calculated to confirm the proclaimed word. But, ah ! how disgraceful and destructive has been the perverse choice of man. He refuseth to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely. He is *like the deaf adder* : the music of the heavenly

strain has nothing of harmony to his ear ; and whether it fall upon him in the melody of love in Jesus, exhibited to guilty sinners, or in the louder tones of judgment, ready to avenge the cause of God and strike the rebel into the pit, in vain is the appeal : “ We have piped unto you and ye have not danced, we have mourned unto you and ye have not wept.” The truth is, there is no sympathetic chord which can be touched. Man’s heart is destitute of love or fear, when these momentous subjects would claim them ; and with an awful indifference to eternal things, confirmed by his enmity to things *spiritual*, he refuses the proclamation, and comes under the condemnation spoken by our Lord, “ Ye *will* not come unto me that ye might have life.” It is not therefore by being merely *addressed*, that the heart is obtained for Christ. The invitations that are thus brought near to man, serve but to give opportunity for the developement of man’s determination to be an alien : they are as the touchstone to our nature, or as the temptation or proof bringing out the latent evil of the heart’s enmity, and serving to display to all creation *what* is the nature of human depravity. There is indeed in one respect what some persons are so earnest to advocate, viz. *a*

will that is free : there needeth no constraint upon this faculty to render man free to the service of evil, he pursues it with appetite, eagerly, deliberately, voluntarily ; indeed, were this faculty otherwise than free, it must lose its own characteristic, and cease to be *will* ; for what a man does by reason of necessity, which were he able he would resist, cannot be described as performed with his will. In this sense, therefore, all men are free in the full bent of their will, with their affections preferring the things which are abhorred by the Lord. Thus corrupt man has no faculty remaining in him that is true to God's claims, and is a creature not to be moved to the service of his God, so long as his will remains in its native condition. It is consequently this faculty that, holding so important a station in the affairs of man, must receive the first operation of the Spirit. It is the inlet, or door, through which the Lord must enter in order to take possession of the whole man ;—hence Jesus says, “ Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man open the door unto me, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me.” General invitations are as a blow upon the door, demanding admittance ; *the reasonings*, excuses, or resolves by which

the demand is resisted, are as the bolt, bars and locks, holding the door closed in strong defiance of the appeal; and so holding it, that were it not that the Holy Ghost, himself condescending to interpose, undertakes to draw back the bolt, and to subdue the resistance, never would one human heart be made a home for Christ. This is no bare assertion unwarranted by revelation, but is the testimony spoken by the Lord himself, "*It is God that worketh in you to will.*" Phil. ii. 13. The work is of a covenant character also, for it belongs to the counsel of God in Christ, according to the prophetic Psalm, wherein the Lordship and Headship of Messiah are revealed. "Thy people shall be *willing in the day of thy power.*" Psalm cx. 3. "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called," Rom. viii. 30. "called," as is shewn in the twenty-eighth verse, "according to his own purpose." "With an holy calling, according to his own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus, before the world began." 2 Tim. i. 9. General invitations by this operation become *special* addresses, carried home by the Holy Ghost. The ambassador *declares* the *message*, "We then, as ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us;

we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God." 2 Cor. v. 20. But it is the Lord of the message that carries it into the understanding, and gives it power to prevail. This operation does not change the nature of the will, it is still a faculty whereby man as a free agent can determine what he will choose, and what reject; but there is a change in the *governing dispositions*, the grace of the Spirit imparts to it a holy liberty, wherein it shakes off the old master, and joyfully receives the Lord. Hence the man is still a *voluntary* servant: what he does to the Lord, he does freely, with appetite, deliberately, lovingly. In this first stage of liberation from his old master, he comes into the circumstances which were referred to in the subject of adoption, his *consent* is obtained, and he solemnly renounces his former association, that he may now pass into another family, and have for his Father, his Saviour and his God.

We have various passages in Scripture wherein the Lord delighteth to exhibit his triumph in the prosperity of his embassy to men, and by which he settles the disputed point, shewing to whom the glory shall be given of the first closing in with himself, "No man," saith Christ, "can come to me, except

the Father draw him." "We are not sufficient of ourselves, to think a good thought as of ourselves." "My sheep hear my voice, and follow me." "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you." "All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me." These are words that plainly declare man's incompetency to will his own salvation, and Jesus' sovereignty to determine how and when the alien shall be willing to become the friend.

Subjects such as these may appear mysterious, and to the taste of the natural man must be unpalatable; and even so also to many professed disciples, who are ready to say with the men of old, "this is a hard saying, who can hear it." Happy will it be, if it do not move them to a further similarity, as these "walked no more with him." And we, if yielding to the reasonings of our own fancied wisdom, instead of accepting the plain assertions of our infinitely wise Redeemer, shall be in imminent danger of plunging into that perilous sea of faithless reasonings, where too many have foundered, and been lost for ever. It is the want of simplicity and humility which makes us cavil and object; a disciple is a *learner*, and should preserve his character,

sitting at the feet of Jesus, and receiving with meek surrender of his own wisdom, whatever drops from the lips of his Divine Instructor. It is not that the doctrines of the gospel call for the destruction of man's reason; in its sublime and glorious revelation, the sanctified reason can find the richest repast; nor is there one particle of the soul-satisfying testimony that will not commend itself to the mind of such as have received the Anointing. Many wonderful mysteries must remain *above* the reach of the human mind, but not *contrary* to the *just* judgment of an intelligent and rational creature. In the subject before us we must discover what is reconcileable to all *scriptural* religion; for receiving the divine witness which respects man's total loss, spiritually and morally, of every thing excellent and of every inclination to recover his loss, it will be a necessary consequence, that if he be restored to God and placed in the relation from which man fell, it is by a work which he can neither prompt, secure, nor assist.

We will hope that with many under whose eyes the present pages fall, further argument in proof of the doctrine is unnecessary. An acquaintance with *ourselves* will be the best and the sure comment upon this positive reve-

lation; and every one to whom the Lord has revealed somewhat of the extent of man's destructive fall will be made willing to the exercise of *this* act of humility. Such will confess that in them a stubborn will, and a rebellious heart, combined to resist the Lord, and that proof has been sufficiently clear in them of this present change of service being the result of a purpose in the Lord, moving him to a work of invincible grace. It is by this experience that the lovely fruits of the Spirit are fostered and matured. Being stripped of self-importance, we are prepared to resist self-dependance. Being deprived of dependance upon self, we are in the way to experience rest in the Lord. In proportion to our genuine sense of obligation to grace *alone* for every gracious movement, we are encouraged to glorify our God by confidence in Him for every coming day, seeing that he is faithful, who having begun the good work, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ. This use is made of the doctrine to the Philippians, whom Paul thus exhorts, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, *for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do.*" Phil. ii. 13. No encouragement equal to that derived from this persuasion can be

proposed to the believer, and the children of God will testify from age to age that they have found from this revelation, *honey* out of the rock! Yes, "Our God is the Rock, his work is perfect," and from the perfection of his counsels his people draw their peace.

Let us press onwards in our race, and having obeyed the call, make sure our *vocation*—with devotedness of body, soul, and spirit; let us manifest the victory which our Lord has obtained, in having brought us to the service and rest of love. Our sanctity and our joyfulness will tell what Jesus Christ has been to us, and we shall be privileged as faithful witnesses to speak his praise.

XII.—GLORIFICATION, OR FINAL AND ETERNAL BLESSEDNESS.

OUR past pages have exhibited the privileged believer, as interested in the riches that are in Christ Jesus, and we have endeavoured to look into the operative will of our Almighty God, as seen in the *new* creation of his people. Many glorious truths have been before us, whereby our Lord and Saviour is exhibited as crowned with honour, and in which we discover the sure foundation on which the weakest of his children are privileged to rest. There remaineth another subject of deep interest to us all, and to which our attention must now be given.

Notwithstanding the divine purpose to save the lost from the destruction of the fall, the sentence pronounced upon man is invariably executed. “It is appointed unto all men once to die.” Heb. ix. 27, and the heirs of eternal glory have no exemption, but pass through that suffering which belongs to a

dying hour. The sentence is in itself a curse, being the sentence of judgment, in consequence of transgression. Gen. iii. 17 ; Rom. v. 12. And as we are all partakers of the original provocation, it hath pleased God that we should all alike bear this mark of our relation to the fallen Adam. The *circumstances* of death are also extremely humiliating. The wasting sickness, the foul disease, the sudden arrest, all proclaim man's corrupt, impotent, and frail condition, succeeded too by that awful spectacle, a lifeless form, wherein beauty and energy and influential powers are exchanged for silence and corruption. The fairest flower may "come up," as Job expresses it, but it is soon cut down and withereth; the most towering cedar may stand in high dignity, but the worm is its companion, and it falls from its pride. "The worm shall feed sweetly upon him; he shall be no more remembered." Job xxiv. 20. "I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister." Job xvii. 14.

But to the hour of death the benefit of the *Redemption* is applied; the sentence, although passing upon all men, "for that all have sinned," comes upon the children of God in

the full expression of eternal love and grace. "The sting of death is sin," but death is challenged, "O death, where is thy sting?" *sin* is taken away, for the atonement hath prevailed, Dan. ix. 24. The curse is rolled away, for it passed to the head of the sin-bearing surety. Death is made harmless, for the covenant of life in Jesus prevails. "Death is swallowed up in victory," "through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. xv. 55—57. These are plain assertions written in the word of God, and herein *covenant provision* is revealed, from which the ransomed of the Lord derive holy consolation. He who hath undertaken our cause has triumphed in our behalf, and through death has overcome him who had the power of death, that is the devil," Heb. ii. 14. It is true we sicken, we decline, and we drop; but not unsustained, not cheerless; the promise of the Lord is, "I will make all thy bed in thy sickness." And again, "O death, I will be thy *plagues*;" and the dying scenes of saints afford an unceasing memorial to the praise of that unchanging Redeemer who in his own ever-present power is *with us when we die*—with us also *when dead*! The lifeless body, though forsaken by its immortal inmate the soul, is not forgotten by its Lord. The

earthly house of this tabernacle is part of the *redeemed property* of Christ. "Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your *body* and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Cor. vi. 20. The grave, wherein the purchased possession is deposited is a sanctified hiding-place, receiving a treasure: ah! affecting to declare, sown in weakness, in corruption, in dishonour; but sown as a deposit that ere long will be recovered to light and life, and to appear in power, in incorruption, in glory. He who, as Redeemer, became "the plague of death," in the same office became "the destruction of the grave"—"O grave, I will be thy destruction." Hosea xiii. 14. And as he abides with his people when they encounter the last struggle in this mortal scene, so doth he keep his omniscient eye on their slumbering frames when mingled with the dust. He is the *Resurrection* and the *Life*; and, the body shall rise again. John v. 25; xi. 25.

The doctrine of the resurrection of the body is not only revealed to our faith as an article essentially belonging to Christianity, but it is also commended to us as a necessary part of a promise wherein the redemption of *human nature* entire is proposed. Human nature is *composed* of a united soul and body; it were

not sufficient, therefore, that the immortal soul be deemed responsible, it is *man* that is the responsible and that is the redeemed creature. Hence in the common use of terms, we are accustomed to say, the *soul* of such-an-one, or the *body* of such-an-one; but speaking of each as united, we say the man, the person; and of the saints, as the redeemed servants of Christ, serving him with all the powers and faculties of soul and body, we speak of both as alike under the sanctifying grace of the Holy Ghost: see Rom. xii. 1, 2; vi. 18, 19. The separation of body and soul in death cannot, therefore, be abiding; and however long the period may be, according to the estimate we make of time, ere the re-union take place, the fact is certain, the hour will come when man entirely, and men universally, will appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.

By the riches of divine grace, the redemption is first realized by the *separate soul*. He who watches over the slumbering tabernacle in the dust, receives the immortal soul into his bosom of rest. The souls of the saints are described in Rev. vi. 10, 11. as underneath the altar, ever engaged in adoring tributes to the Lamb, although waiting with holy longings for their perfection, through the restoration of

their bodies from the ground. Souls do not participate in the unconscious condition of the body. The dying Stephen exclaimed, " Lord Jesus ! receive my spirit : " he saw him standing on the right hand of God, he beheld him waiting the moment, when his precious martyr should wing his way from the clamour of his murderers, to place him in safety for ever in his presence. It was a vision granted also to the Apostle Paul, whose ardent soul, notwithstanding the zeal which made him ready to endure all things for the elect's sake, longed for the more immediate fulness awaiting him, when being " absent from the body, he should be present with the Lord." " I am in a strait betwixt two, *having a desire* to depart and *be with Christ*, which is far better." To this immediate blessedness the dying thief was directed to look, when in the midst of his agony upon the cross he was assured by his Redeemer, " To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." We know not the dream of the men who talk of a sleep to which the immortal and ever-active soul of man is consigned ; neither do we with foul dishonour to the Redeemer's blood and merit, calculate on gloomy regions after death, to be entered by blood-bought souls, where, in a fire of purgatory, they suffer, that they may

atone for sin. Oh, no! the scriptures of truth point us to brighter scenes, and tell us of bliss secured by the Forerunner, "who for us hath entered within the veil," and of an immediate entrance into the mansions prepared by him, and where "the spirits of just men made perfect" are assembled in joy. Many a favoured apostle and saint has been of old privileged with bright revelations, and with vision of open heavens unveiling to them the hidden glory, and the countless millions already around the throne, whose high hallelujahs swell the chorus above. And we by faith looking through the same medium, behold the glory; for Christ "hath entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us;" and we come with holy boldness, by this new and living way, to present communion and anticipated rest. "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." 2 Cor. v. 1. Thus believers die; their bodies sleep in the dust, their souls are in the presence of God on high, being reserved for a re-union in the resurrection from the dead, when, in the perfected graces of the redemption, they shall be *glorified*.

Until this period the redemption is not considered complete in its effects, either as it respects the glory of Christ, or the dignity of his people. As yet there remaineth obscurity and a cloud upon his purposes, on his government and on his church; and these shadows will not be done away until the breaking of the morning wherein the Sun of Righteousness will gloriously arise with wide-spreading effulgence, making all things manifest in their real character. To this period the church is directed in terms which sufficiently show how to her it will be a great advance in bliss and perfection. The redeemed will be brought unto the Lord "in raiment of needle-work," Psalm xlv. "in white garments," Rev. xix. 8, "in glorious attire," Rev. xix. 6—8, presented as "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing," Ephes. v. 27; and accordingly believers are possessed of their present communion with Christ as an earnest of their inheritance, "*until the redemption of the purchased possession,*" Ephes. i. 14, and of their child-like assurance, as "*waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*" Rom. viii. 23. What can these expressions mean, but that the saints of Christ, already acquainted with the redemp-

tion and possessed of the spirit of adoption, are reserved for some further exhibition and realization of what these privileges import. What this further portion intends, is made known by the doctrine of the re-union of soul and body, when mortality shall be swallowed up of life, and *man* as the redeemed and restored creature of God shall be *glorified*. Thus shall all the promises in Christ Jesus be verified to the church : and then shall all the glory of Christ be the crown upon his head, seen and known of all, for “he will come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.” 2 Thess. i. 10.

The raised body will be made a meet companion to the perfected soul. Unlike to its former state of infirmity, it will enter upon immortality, and possess it with spiritual appetites, and exquisitely perfected capabilities, whereby to increase the happiness enjoyed. And instead of being a heavy load or impeding weight in the soul’s high services, it will minister to the king with offerings meet for heaven. Thus the saints are bid to anticipate their glory. “Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned

like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." Phil. iii. 20, 21. And thus the faith of believers of old is expressed, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he will stand at the latter day upon the earth, and though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold and not another." Job xix. 25—27. "The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God." Rom. viii. 21. "The body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his spirit that dwelleth in you." Rom. viii. 10, 11.

That this doctrine is intimately connected with *the redemption* will now clearly appear; and it is interesting thus to find ourselves brought, in the conclusion of our present view, to the recollection of the opening statement, so that we may link the whole together as forming not only a chain, but also a circle of endless wonders which shall form the theme of *endless praise*.

There are some interesting particulars belonging to this subject, which, when properly received, contribute much to the joy of the soul. We have information in the scripture that in order to effect and manifest this perfection of the saints, Christ will come again, and that his return will be attended with peculiar liberation to his people in the earth, and proportionable exaltation to such as form the glorified church. The return of our Lord will be a day of *judgment*—that is of rule, and power, displayed in the destruction of whatever is opposed to his sway, and in righteousness and peace amongst his saints; these, in many instances, he will *bring with him*, and in others he will *gather to him*. “The Lord cometh *with* ten thousand of his saints.” Jude 14. “And the Lord thy God shall come and all his saints *with* him.” Zech. xiv. 5. “If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God *bring with him*.” 1 Thess. iv. 14. These are the souls separate from their bodies, who in a glorious company attend the Saviour’s return, and come that they may receive their rebuilt tabernacle, for “the dead in Christ shall rise first,” raised by the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, “every man in his

own order, Christ the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." "And I saw thrones, and they that sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them, and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God.....and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years; *but the rest of the dead* lived not again until the thousand years were finished. *This is the first resurrection.*" Rev. xx. 4, 5. No doubt can be entertained respecting the condition of the company thus distinguished, they are then in their glorified state, as is shewn by the sixth verse of this chapter. To these will be added another company, taken from the earth, and caught up into the air to *meet* the Lord, for as it is said, "We which are alive shall not prevent them that are asleep," so, when the graves shall have yielded their sacred treasure, "they which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thess. iv. 15, 17:

"Behold," saith St. Paul, "I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet

shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. She who now looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, shall then appear clear as the sun; and clothed in her splendid attire, she shall form a new, a brilliant heaven, in the light of which the nations of them that are saved, shall walk. Rev. xxi. 24. This is that Bride, the Lamb's Wife, or, by another figure, that great city, the holy Jerusalem, *descending out of heaven* from God, having the glory of God. Rev. xxi. 9, 10. And this is that new heaven, "I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth." Hosea ii. 21. "Behold, I will make all things new." Rev. xx. 5. "A *new heaven* and a new earth." 2 Peter iii. 13.

Our great Redeemer will in that great day receive to himself this his purchased possession. The redemption and the adoption will then be completed in the glory of these, and to them the full portion of saints will be given: "If children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." Rom. viii. 17. Death, and the grave, and hell, and sin, will cease towards them, and the testimony be fully proved, "Whom he did predestinate them he also called, and whom he called them he

also justified, and whom he justified them he also glorified." Rom. viii. 30.

May it be our part to press towards the attainment of the privilege thus proclaimed, for "blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ." Rev. xx. 6. Let us, however, faithfully accept the gospel pledge of eternal glory in the promise, in the *earnest* of which probably we are partakers, and recollect that Jesus gave himself for his people—died for them—that "whether they wake or sleep, they should live together with him." 1 Thess. ix. 10. Wherefore we comfort ourselves together with these words, and look to the approaching day when the wicked shall be silent in darkness, but the righteous shall shine forth like the sun, and when the Lord shall reign gloriously amidst his saints, in the *new heaven*, amidst *glorified* bodies and souls,—in the *new earth*, amidst spiritual subjects of his kingdom. In the mean time, there are very important lessons arising out of the doctrine of the separation of soul and body, and their re-union.

The certainty of our own departure from *present* scenes should form a subject of serious

consideration. The separation of soul and body awaits us, for "we must all be changed." To *nature* the event is alarming, and many even of the children of God are tempted to turn from the recollection of its approach ; but this is inconsistent ; our Lord came to deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage, Heb. ii. 14. and having loosed the bands of condemnation, his redeemed should feel their purchased liberty. To such as know his salvation, departure from the state in which we now are should be desirable, since the grave will afford a quiet resting-place for a body often enduring much suffering and inconvenience here on earth, and the opened heavens will receive the soul to high association with the blessed, and, above all, to near vision of Jesus' face. A filial disposition should prevail, and a Father's home above be the place to which our affections tend. How unfeignedly did the saints of old wait for this salvation, thirst for this possession, and rejoice to go home. Their privilege was not peculiar to them, it is the inheritance of every child, and to start back from it is to act inconsistently with the relation we bear to the Lord.

No doubt the bed of death will be sanctified

to the sufferer ; there is no pang either of body or of mind that is not known by him who passed through the dying agony, and he beholds his people's anguish with tenderest sympathy. Could we more powerfully realize this, we should hear his voice, and feel his arm ; and surely, while so cheered and sustained, we should pass the conflict not only in security but in triumph." "The righteous hath hope in his death." Prov. xiv. 32. His Lord has "the keys of death and hell." Rev. i. 18. His Lord *is life*, and he joys in the confidence that "He that hath the Son hath life." 1 John v. 12. If we are *so* saved, let us endeavour *so* to rejoice ; and let us *accept* the promise by which we may be reminded of bliss to come, and be weaned from earthly cares or joys.

The certainty of a resurrection from the dead should impress us deeply with a sense of the value of the *body*. It is the creation of God, in its original formation endowed with wonderful capacities, and in the redeeming work of the covenant is included as forming part of the Lord's inheritance. During its present being, it is the dwelling place, not only of a soul that has been redeemed by the *blood* of the Lamb, but of the Holy Spirit

himself—"Your bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost."

The humiliating circumstances of which even redeemed bodies are partakers, should not make us unmindful of the glory that will appear;—we part with it in death only that it may be restored again in life. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption," "but this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality," and thus that saying be fulfilled, "As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly," and awaking up in the likeness of our God we "shall be satisfied!" Our diligent devotion should be invigorated by these considerations, and the little space that remains between us and the grave be filled with the abundance of holy service. The coming glory of our Lord should be the enlivening theme on which our minds rejoice to meditate. The scriptures which describe the majesty of his appearance, and the consequent judgment of the inhabitants of the earth, ought to be prayerfully investigated. We should not be ignorant of the signs of our times,—the gathering confederacy of Messiah's adversaries, so proudly infatuated

and so soon to be overthrown; the slumbering unconsciousness of the professing church, so speedily to be exchanged for alarm and surprise; the condemnable carelessness and want of faith in the elect, so near to the experience of which our Lord has forewarned us in Matt. xxv.—all these tokens of the days we live in should be *seen* and improved. The characteristic marks of the faithful who live according to their privilege, their believing expectation, desires, and labours, corresponding with their belief of the word, should be observed and emulated, remembering the words of the Spirit: “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost; keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” Jude 20, 21. “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation and godliness; looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God.” 2 Peter iii. 11, 12. Marvellous things are spoken of that day, with which believers ought to be acquainted; it hath its terrors of a fearful nature and extent, for it “burns as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that *do wickedly*, shall be as stubble, and the day

that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." God will thunder from heaven, and pour his hail-stones and fire upon the earth beneath—a fire and vengeance that will light on all "that obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. Whatever may be the difference of *degrees* of unrepented sin, which this day will overtake, it will be visited with the sentence of exclusion from God's grace and presence, and the storm will sweep all away, and make a *clean* work in righteousness. Wherefore, when we look to the millennial reign, and hail the approach of the blissful restitution, we should remember the judgments by which that peace will be preceded, and *practically* improve the Spirit's cautioning voice:—to take heed lest we be seduced—lest we be ensnared—lest we be unwatchful—lest that day overtake us as a thief—and rather give diligence to be found of Christ in peace, with our lamps trimmed, our garments white, our head lacking no ointment, our conversation in heaven—that we may be of such as are described as able to say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

May the eternal Spirit animate us by his sacred fire burning on the altar of our hearts ; and, after receiving such revelation from heaven as written for our instruction, empower us in genuine love to conclude the whole with the Bible's concluding words—" Amen, Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

THE END.



